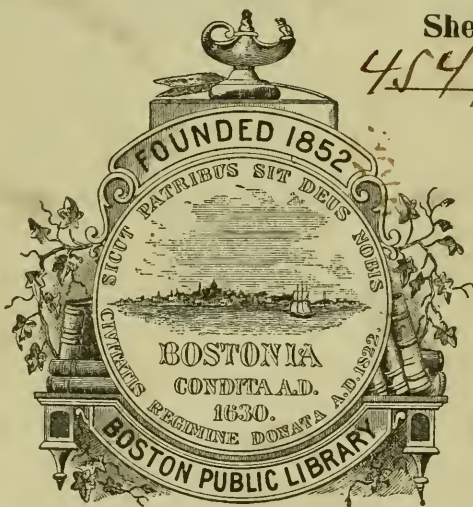


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MORE ABOUT GORDON



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BY  
ONE WHO KNEW HIM WELL

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# MORE ABOUT GORDON



## CHAPTER I.

I DO not feel that any apology is necessary for bringing before the public a few reminiscences of a man so remarkable in every way as the late General Gordon. My friendship with him dates from 1867, and extends over a long period of years—in fact, even to the end of his life, for the last of the eighty-six letters I received from him was written to me from Khartoum on the day after his arrival. I do not doubt that he wrote after that, but

that his messengers did not succeed in getting safely away with the letters. I have a facsimile copy of one letter he sent to the Governor of Darfur, which the messenger concealed under his thumbnail, and so carried out his mission successfully. But no doubt other messengers did not succeed so well.

Nearly ten years have passed away since all England mourned for Gordon, and not England only, but far away in the East as well as in the West there was heartfelt grief and lamentation when the tidings of his massacre became known. His memory is still green; he is by no means forgotten; therefore I have thought that many might be interested to read a few personal reminiscences of Gordon as I knew him.

In the year 1867, we — that is, my husband and I, and three little children—

were living at Milton-next-Gravesend, and Gordon was engaged in building the Forts at the mouth of the Thames, and also those further down the river. The first time I met him was on one evening in July, 1867, when he came at my husband's invitation to spend the evening with us.

I had no idea, neither had my husband, that he was in any way remarkable, yet I felt both amazed and puzzled greatly at our new visitor. Almost boyish in his appearance and in some of his utterances, yet with an eye and an expression that might have been a thousand years old, I felt he was no ordinary man; but though listening to and watching him all the evening, I could not label him, as it were. He left us, and was to me an unsolved problem, and I only wished he would come soon again, that we might unravel

him and understand the mystery. About three weeks after, he did come again, and we all went out for a walk together in the evening. That walk stands out clear in my recollection, and intensely vivid even at this distance of time. We exchanged ideas on the deepest of all subjects; we felt drawn together by a common bond. He was delighted to find any who could sympathize with him on topics that few cared to discuss, and we rejoiced in the companionship of this superior mind, striking out as it did a truth here, suggesting a deep thought there, and yet mixed with it all a vein of mysticism, which we found very fascinating.

Shall I here describe his personal appearance at that time? He was of medium height, and had a thin yet well-knit figure; his movements were very rapid; his articu-

lation not very clear, and at times he talked extremely fast; he had a well-shaped head covered with short dark curly hair, and a well-developed forehead; a nose rather short and broad in the bridge; a mouth, not sweet in expression, but firm, and a square strong jaw; he wore a slight moustache and whiskers, but no beard; and then the eyes—I have left them to the last—in colour they were a very light gray and fine in shape, and were intensely penetrating and clear. I always declared he could see through a millstone, and I certainly think he saw through everybody in a most wonderful way.

Shortly after that evening walk he was sitting with us at tea, when he spoke of China, which caused me to remark, ‘Oh, were you ever in China? Do tell us something about life there.’ And my husband

added, 'Did you see anything of the Taiping Rebellion when you were there?' 'I should think I did,' said he; 'why, it was I who put an end to it,' to which my husband said, 'You don't mean that?' while I looked at him, and for two or three seconds wondered if it could be possible that this young man was bragging—a vice I should not have expected to find in him. Of course, presently my husband (whom I will call F. in future) elicited by question all about his career in China, and we discovered that he was indeed a remarkable man, and my puzzle about him was at an end.

Soon after this my little boy of four had a terrible accident, by which his hand was much burned, and Gordon's great sympathy for and tenderness with him began a loving friendship with my boy

that only ended at Khartoum. He asked both the boys one day what they would like to be when grown up, to which Eddie, aged five, replied, 'A missionary,' and his brother (younger) said he would like to be a keeper of a Zoological Garden. From that time Gordon always called them the 'Mission and the Heathen.' He liked contractions; 'Missionary' was too long.

He sent up to Eddie what he called 'The key of the wicket-gate'—I have it still—that was to admit us at any time to the Fort House garden, which he facetiously called Paradise, and, indeed, it was Paradise for the children. The beehives on the lawn, the old-fashioned flowers, the cannon on the ramparts, the ships on the river, that swung round as the tide turned—all delighted the children, and F. and I also thought we should enjoy walking

there, as he had invited us to do ; so one evening we took the key and let ourselves in at the wicket-gate, thinking we should have the garden to ourselves ; greatly to our surprise, we found several old people hobbling about in various directions. On speaking of this to him afterwards, he said, 'Oh yes, I have had keys made for all of them to go in and out as they please.'

The housekeeper came out to speak to us, and we told her we were pleased to see the Colonel had such nice vegetables and fruit for his table ; but she told us he never touched any of them, and that every portion of the garden was marked out in little plots and given to different poor people to cultivate for themselves. Nothing was grown for him. She also told us that frequently presents of fine fruit were sent to the Colonel, but he



would never taste so much as one of them, but either took or sent them off at once to the Infirmary, or Workhouse, or to some sick person or other. He was absolutely indifferent to all food.

It was shortly after this that one evening we went to his house late, and when he came in we saw his tea set out on the table. I remarked how very uninviting it looked. His reply (in action) was to take the little stale loaf and cram it into the slop-basin, and pour upon it the contents of the teapot, saying that in a few minutes it would be ready to eat, and that in half an hour after it would not in the least matter what he had eaten. He could not bear to be pressed to eat, and when on one occasion I took him to task for not feeding himself better, he said, 'Mrs. F., I would not stand that from my own mother.' He

also told us that when in China he only ate when hungry, and that it was a great source of wonder to many round him how his life was sustained, for he said it was generally in the night that he would pay a visit to the larder or commissariat, when he would suck ten or a dozen eggs, and so satisfy his need. He also told us that he never knew what it was to have an appetite. This I attributed to his habit of perpetual smoking, the one luxury he allowed himself.

I have spoken of his penetrating eye, which pierced through all deception. One evening when we three were together at our house, a man came to speak to F. He was the agent of a religious society in the town, and F. was his superintendent. The man talked a long while, being full of complaints. Gordon looked at him

steadily for a minute, and then, putting his head in his hands, and leaning his elbows on the table, waited patiently till the wearisome stream of words should end. When the man had left, F. said to Gordon, 'What do you think of him?' His only reply was to trace in the air with his finger an imaginary line from left to right. We asked, 'What does that mean?' The reply was, 'Cut off his head.'

In explanation he told us that his predecessors in China, when the smallest complaints about others were brought to them, sooner than take the trouble to investigate the case, used to make that sign with their finger in the air, which meant summary execution of the offender; and what he meant to convey about the man in question was that he was worthless—an opinion which after-events fully justified, as he

decamped shortly after with the society's moneys.

But occasionally his penetration was at fault. He came to us one day and told how he had been assisting a poor family for a long time with a dole of fifteen shillings per week, and had frequently visited them and listened to their tale of woe with a sympathizing ear. On the day he spoke of he had called at the house, and instead of knocking at the door, as always previously, he lifted the latch (it was at about six o'clock on a Saturday evening) and walked into the room, going straight up to the tea-table, to find it spread with delicacies (he particularly enumerated shrimps and *hot* cake).

The astonished family all sitting round were dumfounded at his sudden appearance, and were speechless. No one spoke

till he himself broke the silence by saying he thought they might at least ask him to partake of the feast his money had so liberally provided, but as no one dared to reply, he merely turned on his heel and left the house, never to enter it again. He told us naïvely he had often wondered at the scuffling noise there was inside the house always after he had knocked, and at the long time they kept him waiting before admitting him, and he supposed they were putting everything away so as to make the place look as bare as possible.

One of his sayings that always stuck by me was, 'You may give away hundreds of pounds and scarcely get any gratitude from your fellow-creatures, but do anyone the least spiritual good, and you bind him to you for ever.' Another saying, noting what pleasure we had in daily

country walks, was, 'The best pleasures are also the cheapest.'

We had a difference of opinion, though, about going to a concert. I was greatly looking forward to one, and urged him to go too, but he said nothing would induce him to do such a thing; he said there was too much misery on every hand for people to go to concerts; he told me I should see on the platform the pale faces of the poor women I had been visiting, etc. I entirely differed from him, and told him that if he loved music he would not speak like that, which remark nettled him rather, and he declared he did care for music, but I hold my own opinion on that point. He enjoyed hearing his boys sing hymns to a lively tune, but he neither understood nor loved music; it was not taught in boys' schools when he was a lad, as it is now.

Again, our garden was not large, and had few flowers. I looked with covetous eye on the flowers at Fort House garden, and at last asked if I might pick some for the table. He at once said I was to have them as often as I liked, but he told me he considered it a weakness to care for flowers. To my astonished query, 'Do not you, then, care for flowers?' he replied that the human face divine was more interesting to him to look at than any amount of flowers. I believe his penetrating eye caused him to find much to amuse and interest him in the 'human face divine.'

He often surprised me by replying to my unspoken thought, and he said once to F.: 'I can read your wife's face like a book.' I often wondered how he got this intuition, and I thought it

was because he had got to the *end of himself*: he had no self, and so the eye within was full of light, and he could see clearly where others were often quite in the dark.

His intensely sympathetic nature also helped him to read others.

‘I used to cry over my wounded in China,’ said he. It was this sympathy for the hardness in the lives of others that made him get the boys together to teach them, feed them, sit up all night mending their clothes (as he told me on one occasion he had done, while he begged me not to speak of it to anyone), then find them situations and follow the career of each of them, whether on board ship or in a London shop. In a letter written to Mr. Egmont Hake, part of which he published in his ‘Story of Chinese Gordon,’ I have



described how our curiosity was excited by seeing the large map of the world hanging over his mantelpiece stuck all over with tiny pins, and how, on asking the reason of it, he told us the pins were stuck into the names of the places where these boys had gone whose careers he was following with his thoughts and prayers every day, and as the boys journeyed on, so the pins were shifted by him. It was sad in after years to hear how many of these lads had been killed by accident or died of fever—two had fallen from the masthead of their ship, and others had come to grief in other ways. It would be interesting to know how many survive and remember him now.

On one evening that he spent with us that first summer of our meeting he was saying what a boon he felt it to have

met with us, who could speak freely with him of the things that most interested him, when F. said, 'What did you do before we came?' to which he replied that the days then were long and dull, that his work at the Forts was soon got through, and then there was nothing to do. 'I used,' said he, 'to walk out to Chalk in the afternoon, and go into the churchyard, and think about my father' (then recently dead), 'and kick the stones about and walk back again.' He specially thanked F. for introducing him to the town missionary, who soon found him plenty to do amongst the poor.

I remember he came up to us on the evening of the first day he had begun this work, when I remarked we had scarcely expected to see him that evening, as he had to go, we were told, to

such and such persons, who all lived a good deal scattered from one another; but he said he had already visited them all—we could scarcely credit it.

Early in our acquaintance he told me he had a good photographic apparatus, and I must come down to Fort House with my little boy and he would photograph us; he would appoint a day, he said, and to this I readily agreed. Several weeks passed and I heard no more of this plan, so one day I said to him, ‘Well, when are you going to take our photos?’ to which he replied, ‘Oh, Mrs. F., the photographic apparatus was *condemned!*’

Of course, I wanted to know why, and then I was told that he discovered that it had been a snare to him, by causing him to waste valuable time with it, so he had sent it away, and, so far as we knew, he

never took another photograph. In later years, before he set out for Khartoum, he sent me a photograph he had taken of Fort House as we had known it before the alterations were made, but probably he had this by him before he parted with the apparatus.

He was always so very severe with himself, so liberal and charitable towards others, but the nearer his friends were to himself the more he expected of them.

Talking one day to me he said, 'Mrs. F., you have no business to wear that gold watch-chain; why, it would keep a poor family for weeks.' To which I replied that as it was a present from my husband, who liked to see me wear it, I thought that more of a duty than to sell it for the poor. To this he readily agreed, saying I was quite right,

and that his case was quite different. Of himself he said, 'Having given *all* to God, what am I to keep back? I see no limit.'

I have also told elsewhere of what he did with the gold medal which was specially struck in his honour by the Emperor of China, at the close of the Taiping war. It was large and heavy, and when he was applied to for money for a charity he thought of that medal, and after taking an impression of it in wax (which he gave to me, and which I have now), he sent it to be melted down for the charity--it realized £15. That was how this man valued earthly honours: they were useful only so far as they could benefit his fellow-creatures. There was in him the most complete self-abnegation in everything that I have ever seen.

His days at this time were very pleasant,

being fully occupied, and nearly every evening he would walk up to our house, come round the garden (which went all round one side of the house), and tap with his cane at the window of the room he supposed us to be in. F. usually flew to open the door and admit him, and then followed talks of intensest interest, varied by laughter and jokes, for he had a great deal of humour; and so passed more than two years of life at Gravesend of the closest and most intimate friendship, and the days were very happy ones to us all.

But he soon began to give up some evenings a week to teaching poor boys to read and write and sum. We would go down sometimes and see him at work. I think I see him now, kneeling beside the table where a little fellow was trying to write, and guiding his hand, showing him

how to make the letters—a work needing much patience and love. At the close of the evening the boys would sing, or rather shout at the top of their voices, his favourite hymn, ‘A day’s march nearer home,’ and this he relished greatly.

I have said Gordon was intensely sympathetic with all true suffering, but imaginary woes or fits of low spirits, which he called ‘the doles,’ he was very hard upon, and used to prescribe standing for a day at the wash-tub as a cure. Not but what he was at times melancholy himself, but he was angry with himself on account of this all the same.

It is difficult to write of him without mixing up religion with all one says of him, for, as it permeated his whole life from morning to night and dominated his whole nature, much about him must be

omitted if religion is to be ignored in this short account of him; but I elect to ignore it nevertheless, feeling it would be out of place here.

One of Gordon's peculiarities was that any fixed engagement bored him; he must have perfect freedom, no constraint of any kind. He told us himself that if he fixed times for paying social visits or made engagements, he was sure to break them; therefore we never invited him, or asked him to stay longer when he rose to go, or arranged another meeting, and then we saw the best of him; he was then genial and delightful. But we did not understand this at first; we had to buy our experience.

A widow lady living near took a great fancy to him. He used often to tell us about her, and what a worry she was to



him, telling us how she would send for him if her chimney smoked, if some small repairs were needed in her house, if her servant troubled her; even quite late at night she would send, or if she had a fit of the 'doles,' which was very often. My curiosity was excited, and I asked him to describe her personal appearance, but the only reply I got was, 'I should be very sorry if she trod on my toe.'

He certainly never hesitated about taking trouble for other people, even those who had not the claim of poverty to urge, and who simply availed themselves largely of his good-nature.

A poor lady suffering from a spinal complaint was another of his friends; she was elderly and refined, and he spent many an hour by the side of her couch, enlivening the dulness of her days and

exchanging ideas with her. He used to joke in a gentle way about her extravagant affection for him, which led her to move to lodgings close to Fort House, where from her window she could see every time he went in and out of the house, or into his garden, and great was her joy when he would observe her bath-chair standing at her door and would come and assist her into it.

His housekeeper told me that he was vexed if she grumbled at having to wash the lads he picked out of the street; he thought she ought to have the same zeal and love for them that he had. I confess I pitied her rather. When he told me not to tell anyone how he sat up at night mending the boys' clothes, I thought he enjoined silence from fear of ridicule, but I have since thought it was from fear of

praise. 'He could not bear to be praised for anything; one could scarcely offend him more than by praising him.' He said it always grated on him to hear people say such a man was such a good man; he said we have no native goodness, the goodness is not our own; and when people praise others for being so religious, 'Shall I,' said he, 'praise a man for doing the very best thing he can for *himself*?' 'He was dead against wearing medals or decorations of any sort; he would not even have a gold watch-chain, but always wore a chain of hair, which I think he told me was his mother's hair.

Perhaps the episode about Sir William G. will come in well here; it is very characteristic.

We frequently heard of him from Gordon, who spoke of him as one who

was strongly, and to his mind strangely, attached to himself. One day Sir William sent to Gordon to say that he was coming to Fort House to dine with him. Gordon sent up a despairing note to F. to say that he had no wine fit to set before his friend, and asking if F. could let him have some.

Of course, we were only too pleased to supply it, and Gordon told us that Sir William scolded him for extravagance in going in for such good wine, and then the whole story came out, and next Sir William found fault with him for not having invited F. to assist at the feast. This of course all jokingly. Sir William was no relation, but had been with Charley Gordon in the Crimea, and had learned to love him there. He presented him with a silver tea-service worth about £70, which,

said Gordon, 'will pay for my burial without troubling my family.' The history of that tea-service was also very characteristic. Sir William had told Gordon he had put him down in his will for something very handsome, the only effect of which news on Gordon was to make him very angry, and he told his friend he 'would not have it'; so the matter was compromised by his consenting to accept the tea-service to 'pay for his burial.'

Some years after this Sir William very much wanted Gordon to be his A.D.C. in Scotland.

He was a sad and melancholy man at that time, and he longed to have Gordon always with him; but it was a sore trial to Charlie, who felt himself unsuited for that kind of life, which he considered a very idle one, and idleness

was always to him the greatest misery. I well remember how he was torn in two between not liking to be ungrateful to his old friend or give him pain by saying 'No,' and his strong desire to reject his proposition. He came up several times in one day to talk it over with us; and finally, true to his own principle of choosing for himself that which was the least agreeable, wrote to accept, and we mourned over the thought of losing him, and of all his Gravesend interests being given up to go and bury himself in Scotland.

The next day he wrote up to me that 'Sir William's letter' (accepting his compliance) 'was in the house, and he *fared to open it.*' At last he took courage, and, tearing it open, found his fate was sealed. Then he became very low-spirited;

it weighed on his mind heavily. He told me he could think of nothing else, could not attend properly to his duties, found himself giving contradictory orders about things, and then he thought it was high time to rush off to Southampton and try to recover the balance of his mind. He said, 'as one whom his mother comforteth,' he went to his mother, and somehow or other the appointment was cancelled. Sir William himself released him, but exacted from him a promise that at his death Gordon would be with him.

A year or two after, Sir William asked him to come and stay with him for a short time. He went, and found his friend very melancholy and unhappy; he was ill too, and Gordon, for what he considered very sufficient reasons, removed his razors from him and locked them up. Shortly after a

brother or nephew of Sir William's arrived, to whom he complained of Gordon's action as an indignity to himself, and much against his will and judgment Gordon had to yield and give the razors back. The next day Sir William cut his throat. Gordon's wonderful insight was not at fault; he could see what the relative could not see, and so there was a sad catastrophe. Sir William lingered for a few days and had his wish; Gordon was with him to the last. He told us that his poor friend asked him to kiss him before he died, which of course he did, after which the poor weary sufferer passed peacefully away.

On one occasion I represented to Gordon how much good he might have done with the large sum of money offered him by the Emperor of China and which



he refused to accept ; but he stopped me by saying that, like Abraham, he would not take presents from a heathen, ‘ not so much as a shoe-latchet.’

How dearly he loved his mother ! He went every six weeks to visit her in Southampton, and used jokingly to tell us that he was A.D.C. in close attendance then. He said he could not leave the room without her asking where he was going ; she wanted him to be always in sight, and delighted in making him drive with her all over the place. On one occasion the horses were just starting to run away, when he promptly jumped out, and, seizing his mother in his arms, deposited her safely on the pavement, when the horses immediately bolted. He was so very quick to see and to act—that was always his way.

Gordon loved children, and was always

greatly amused at the quantity of human nature he found in them. At our house he would run half-way up the stairs to the nursery, calling out 'Naughty, naughty!' to the children's great delight. He called them angels, and used to touch their little shoulders and say, 'Where are your wings?'

It was a frequent habit of his in going up the hill, the road to which lay outside our garden hedge, to come in at the lower garden-gate, walk through the garden, staying to talk if there was anyone about, or at the window, and through the other gate out of the garden and so on up the hill. One day he had done this, and after a chat with me at the window, had gone on to the upper gate, to find my three children swinging on it, Ada, aged three, at the top. He stayed patiently expecting them to move and let

him pass; not one stirred, and on his asking permission to go through, Miss Ada merely said, 'Go round to the other gate,' and this impertinence so tickled him that he obeyed her command, coming all the way back and down the hill, after stopping at the window to tell me about it, and so out at the lower gate up the road, outside the hedge past the children, and so on his journey. Years after, when he and his brother, Sir Henry, were with us at Chislehurst, at the time when Napoleon was lying in state, he told this incident to his brother as having been so very amusing. I suppose it was the great contrast between the way he had always been accustomed to give orders to others, and then to be ordered about by this little child and to find himself obeying her, which so amused him.

He used, when coming to see us later at Chislehurst, to take my eldest boy (then seven) into the garden after burying two half-crowns, put a piece of stick to mark the place, and tell him to dig there the next day and he and his brother would find *something*.

He was often so funny about the people he knew at Gravesend. One lady (?), he told us, took offence because he did not call often enough. Of her he laughingly said she 'liked beer with her dinner, and did not like table napkins,' by which he implied a brown moustache was left after her dinner.

Here is a characteristic letter :

' MY DEAR MRS. F.,

' I went to Warwick Castle and Kenilworth Castle to-day. Would you

have cared whether you were Guy Earl of Warwick or the shoemaker of the village *now*, or the Earl of Leicester or the baker? All are in ruins—so sad it seemed. How far better it is to be allowed to be kind to a little lamb than to govern kingdoms.'

And again :

'If you had been in my state you would not have cared about Warwick or Kenilworth. There were boys running about worth millions, and I could not have courage to speak to them. The same feeling would follow me to concerts if I went.'

Another :

'My sister comes (D.V.) next Monday, and the place is to become a *hermitage*. I cannot help it; she likes it, so I shall tell my friends I am in New Zealand till she goes.'

In a letter dated April 27th, 1865, he writes :

‘Terribly disturbed last night by the war tidings, though I was helped. It is more important (though we may sometimes stumble at it) to speak to the “Scuttlers” (boys) than to take Magdala.’

He told us some days afterwards that he was bitterly disappointed he had not been sent to Magdala, and that he shut himself up for a whole day before he could get over it, and went through something.

He visited much in the worst parts of Gravesend, and I find a humorous letter about some incident on one of those occasions.

‘There have been fearful rows on the “West” tragedy, and all upper Star Street was moved last night. The elder

West appeared on the scene, and I believe the people up there were much delighted at the gratuitous exhibition. The curtain fell on the elder West having hold of the ex-Treasurer and leading him off. My sister is highly delighted with the whole family.'

Occasionally interesting and exciting incidents occurred in connection with the lads Gordon had got situations for after training them a little first. One especially I remember. A boy named Alexander Bowie, a stout, heavy fellow, big for his age, was got a place as cabin-boy on a vessel bound for the Azores. On his return he came and told Gordon all about his adventure. It seems the real destination of the vessel was Spain, and the lad described to Gordon how

astonished he was, having thought there was hardly anyone on board, to find, after they had been a day or two at sea, heads with red caps on popping up in different parts of the ship, and several coming on deck, and then they called at different ports in France, and islands, and other places, and finally made for Spain, where the lad came in for the Marshal Prim rebellion (the Marshal was on board), and, to Gordon's delight, described to him the revolution, and the firing, and the noise, and the mob and excitement, and how finally he was well paid and sent back to his home. Gordon enjoyed it all, and not least that Bowie was quite a lion for a time.

Perhaps a few characteristic extracts from some of his letters may not be out of place here. In one he writes :



‘I feel for all your parties most truly, but it is the cross, and as the burden is, so will the strength be. I may say I most truly hope you may not feel with respect to the poor things of this earth as I do.’

Now I confess that I liked parties, so in that matter we had no sympathy.

Again he writes :

‘Why are we so angry with theft and lying? Why does all the world care so much about these, and exclaim against the smallest extenuation of them? Because they are offences against itself and therefore not to be tolerated. Man lays down his laws as paramount, thus—let lying and theft be avoided, and man may be as like a devil as he chooses.’

Again :

‘ Will you not venture down and see the devastation and the giantess (his tall housekeeper) ? I shall not be back till very late. There are a lot of boys outside my door like bees before they swarm !’

He writes on July 20th, 1868, from  
R. Y. S. *Cayman* :

‘ COWES.

‘ MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘ It seems ten or twelve years ago since I saw you, so I will indite a line to you from the ocean. Fortunately it is quiet now, but it is a treacherous element, and I look forward to the morrow with some trepidation. \ Why do people go away from the firm ground, where they are comfortable, in yachts ? \ Will you answer that question ? . The owner of this

is an old gentleman eighty-two years of age. He speaks such truths.

\* \* \* \*

‘ I am so sorry to be away from Jackson, and wish people would leave other mortals alone ; but all is for the best, and we are all “ a day’s march nearer home ” every evening.’

Again, after attending a *levée* :

‘ Thanks for your note and the paper. The event is over, and all are a day’s march nearer home.

‘ Theodore of Abyssinia, with his up-turned face with its glassy eyes staring up into the blue expanse of heaven, into which we may trust his bright and glorious soul has entered, is home. Napier, fêted and honoured, toils on that march to the

haven of rest. "He will not last more than four or five years," was a remark made. It was a glorious sight—200 officers, the Prince and the Duke, etc., etc.

'I dare say I shall see you to-morrow, but I shall not to-day.'

Again :

'26th July, 1868.

'*Auto da Fé* arrived suddenly and appeared in the garden this morning on my return from Tilbury Fort! and is going to stay! I can add no more than a suppressed wish that it was this day fortnight or three weeks.'

After a few preliminary remarks, he writes :

'31st July, 1868.

'I went to Woolwich yesterday, and came back same night. Peace reigns

here. *Auto da Fé!!!* (hurrah!) will leave (hurrah!), though I have asked him to stay!

‘I met the D. T. (not the *delirium tremens*) in the road, and I gave to her some tracts to give away, which she said she would. Good-bye.

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.

‘P.S.—You speak of the scarlet fever, etc.’ (This, I may say, was when I had told him I thought he should not run unnecessary risk in visiting such cases.)

‘You do not think the bottom of a coal mine is a nice place to live in, though while the collier is there he must do his work and not grumble or try to leave it; yet you will not blame him if he would like to hear an order passed for him to come up.’

Gordon had often said to catch a disease and die of it would be a most welcome fate for him.

Again :

‘*Auto da Fé* left at 5 45 p.m. I may never see him again.’

In one letter we have this sentence :

‘One blessing of a Christian’s life is that he daily grows younger and younger, and is as it were *born* when he dies.’

A postscript in another letter runs thus:

‘I have been busy and lazy since I saw you last century ; but we are all on a stage since then, and, I expect, have been attacked by our foes—at least, I have very much, and have humbly come to the con-

clusion that though we may understand all mysteries, we will have no solace from attacks in trifles, such as Mary the servant-girl, or the little Kings minding sheep or playing in the streets.'

Again :

' Had a deeply interesting walk yesterday, and many adventures with Royalty.\* Sorry *Mission* is not what he should be, poor little Dove !

' I saw Mr. W. about the lads, and he said he would think over it. I do not think he likes it, for the three boys he has at his school would, I fear, follow me into the cottage. Oh, for more elevated thoughts, above such trifles ! I would clean his boots with pleasure if he would surrender this.'

\* Royalty meant the boys, whom he called Kings.

(The *Mission* was my eldest boy of four, who had been badly burnt, and was taken to Broadstairs to recover strength.)

At first Gordon thought he would be able to come down to Broadstairs and visit us, but instead he wrote thus :

‘I cannot come down, thank you. I have not time, for what with one thing and another I am worked from morn till eve. My dear Mrs. F., to be happy here is utterly impossible ; we may have peace, but not happiness. \ We must live on the other side of the river of Death, and it is there only there is rest. How I wish for myself and friends this was more realized ! This world is at the best only bearable because every day shortens our time in it. Yesterday I was in London seeing a person who had devoted all her means,



time and life to visiting the sick, etc. She was saying that my sister's marriage might shorten my mother's life (who is *her* sister), as if it was a thing to be lamented about.

^ Either death is the most blessed gift or the most hateful event; there is no mean about the question. ^ Death is the glorious gate of eternity, of glory, and of joy unmixed with a taint of sorrow; ^ there is a vast void in us unfilled while here below. ^

' Pardon my writing thus, but you agree with me in theory, and my hope is that you and I may know it day by day *more* by experience; ^ therefore, if you see anyone fading away (which I do not think is my state), envy him or her, and say, "How long—how long will I be passed over? When will my time be come?" ^ Let this be with patience, for we have great works

to do, but be *straitened* till the baptism comes.

‘*September, 1868.*’

When staying with Sir William Gordon, he writes :

‘HARPERFIELD, LANARK,  
‘*October 6th, 1868.*’

‘MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘Just a line to say I hope you and Mr. F. and the Mission are getting on well. . . . The country is very sparsely occupied, and the people shun you more than seek you. I would not be the owner of these estates for a great deal, and I think that better the trials and sorrows of a town, for breaking up the fallow ground of the heart, than the quiet vegetation with inward corruption of the country life. I believe there are many Kings (red-haired) about, but I cannot get at them

with facility, as I do not like vexing my old friend, who dislikes tracts very much. The new leaflets are in press, etc. . . . I told them to send the German and French ones to Mr. F. to correct. . . . I have seldom felt more the value of the Pearl of Price than I have here. The only thing worth having is Him; to teach and to work for Him is in some degree happiness, but to own Him is the essence of joy.'

Another letter ends thus :

' Good-bye. Dinner to-night at mess. Dinner to-morrow at Drake's. Dinner Saturday night, Conservative Club; arrival at Gravesend at 1 A.M. on Sunday morning! How man has fallen! Poor . . . !'

These light touches of humour sparkled

in all his conversation, and in reading them one knew exactly the expression of face and intonation of voice with which he would say them.

There is a characteristic sentence in a letter :

‘ I rudely said I was not coming, as I do not like being expected at any time. I hate the bonds of an engagement, for I always break them.’

He went home for Christmas, and before going wrote to me that the poor invalid lady he had been visiting was ‘ plaintive, and said, “ Think of me at Christmas all alone.” I said, “ *I will, and wish I was the same.*” She was quite hurt. Eat, eat, eat !’

He writes :

*' December 21st, 1868.*

' MY DEAR MRS. F.,

' The little Dove I sent up to see you, Willie Webster, is ill, and they think it scarlet fever, so I will not come nigh you for a time. Bob Weston has also got seedy, and the doctor fears the same thing. If it is so, I think I may put off my leave. (A certain thought will, I doubt not, flash across your mind.)

' Yours sincerely, with kind regards to Mr. F.,

' C. G. GORDON.'

*' December 22nd, 1868.*

' MY DEAR MRS. F.,

' The lads are better, and the doctor says it may not be the scarlet fever, but only a modified form of the same. However, it was just as well to be on the safe side.

‘I have a horror of a sick-chamber. When a poor partridge or hare is wounded, it gets away from its comrades and dies quietly, and that is what I want to do when the time comes and my course is finished. The watchings, the whisperings, etc., around a sick-bed are great trials which I would be spared.’

‘My dear Mrs. F., it cannot be wrong to wish to go to any friend, if that friend is loved (though, I dare say, mixed with that wish is the desire to be rid of troubles, which *is* wrong). No blame is ever given to the sons who look forward to the holidays; in fact, it would be blameworthy if they did not do so. If they ran away and went home, it would be another thing. To die is such transcendent gain, that if a glimmer of the coming of our friend shows itself, it is hailed with delight; but we

must work on as if we thirsted for the life of this world.

‘ This is the inner circle no one enters.’

I have quoted nearly the whole of that letter, as his own words depict so forcibly the thought which was never absent from him, the longing for the next life; and the allusion in a previous letter to the thought which would ‘ flash through my mind ’ when I heard his boys had scarlet fever was with reference to the same subject, *i.e.*, his possible death, and I always combated this point with him, telling him it was morbid—and reminding him that he was here *now*, and should be happy, while he maintained he might be acquiescent and occasionally content, but never happy. But all this was deep down in the ‘ inner circle,’ as he styles it, for no one would

have guessed that he had such thoughts, judging by his constant merry jokes and lively conversation. One is glad he was spared the horrors of dying in a bed, watched by relatives, though to most minds the horrors of his actual death were a thousand times greater.

Another characteristic letter was that on January 21st, 1869, when he says :

‘I think there is nothing like employment for peace and rest ; living in one’s self has a deadening effect on all of us ; thence the poor are so much more cheerful than those in our class of life who have everything.’ I confess to being tired of my own moans and those of others, though they cannot help it. “Take in washing” is the great antidote for all our ills, even if we pay for



being allowed to do that washing, instead of being paid for it.'

In February, 1869, he writes in quite another strain :

' Having read "treacle," by Wilson, I send you up "brimstone," by Lindley. I could not get over to Tilbury last night, having been delayed by the Hydra-headed W.O. [War Office], who sent down a fresh budget of plans, which entailed a day's work. I have hopes that the crop, which has been so prolific of late, will now cease for a time.'

The next letter quoted refers to Sir William Gordon, and the offer he had made, and Charlie accepted, to be his A.D.C. It disturbed him greatly, and he wrote up to me thus :

‘MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘*A fearful letter is in the house, UN-OPENED*, for I have quite enough here for the present, yet how little in comparison to Carter’s trials. [Carter was a paralytic whom Gordon made his care, and whom he pensioned to the day of his death, many years later than the date of this letter.] I hope Mr. F. is well; kind regards to him and the Mission. I stayed at Winchester a day, and saw a nice lad whom I got enlisted into the Rifles; he looked so pleased and happy.

‘Good-bye; I cannot OPEN THE LETTER.

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.’

I have told elsewhere how this affair ended, and how Gordon after all retained

his liberty, and was not called upon to make the sacrifice ; but will just add that the following note was sent up the next evening, which ran as follows :

‘ The letter was opened to-night, and it was very kind.’

And then two days after :

‘ MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘ I broke down to-day at 3.30 a.m., and wrote to decline the appointment.

‘ Yours sincerely,

‘ C. G. GORDON.’

Postscript :

‘ The whole business was a battle of Waterloo.’

One day my husband, wishing to draw

Gordon out more as a public man who could be very useful, asked him to take the chair at a meeting of the Mendicity Society, which they were working together at Gravesend. In his reply to me these words occur, 'I will see you, D.V., to-night, but mean positively to refuse to go on the stage. I cannot and will not do it—there, that is over!'

Shortly after this we left Gravesend and went to live at Chislehurst. We missed Gordon's companionship greatly, but he wrote frequently, and his letters were a great source of pleasure. I shall only quote from them such sentences as are self-revelations, quite unconscious on his part. Speaking of Carter—the paralyzed man to whom Gordon was so very kind, giving him a pension, and letting him have a newspaper every day to the

day of his death, even though Gordon was far away in Africa—he writes :

‘Carter got a good dressing from Mrs. M. for grumbling yesterday, and I think it did him good. He was a perfect Israelite; it was good solid home-made truth she gave him.’

Nothing vexed Gordon more than the constant complaints of people; and with regard to this spirit he wrote :

‘You take exception, and rightly it may be, to my treatment of that insidious disease “the doles,” but in what way are the patients to be treated? Let us look at the disease and those who are attacked with it. They are generally those who have all or most of the comforts of this life. You seldom or never

hear of the kitchen-maid or warehouseman having them. If they had any inclination to them they would soon be driven out of them by their lords and masters, or ladies and mistresses. It is confined to those who are more or less idle, and who have time to have them. What are they? Nothing but a discontented spirit, at variance with God and extremely uninviting to man. You will see the whole secret let out in "Watson on Contentment." To my erring mind there are two modes of treatment—one by sharp and direct rebuke, and the other by treating them lightly. Is one to sit down and mourn with those who have every reason to rejoice beyond measure for all the good things they have been given, thus, as it were, affording colour to their ideas that they are to be pitied, when

they are as callous as a stone to the real miseries of those around them and at their doors? . . . I speak out when I say that it is no religion which sits down groaning and grumbling when there is every reason to be thankful; it is sheer rebellion. . . . I cannot say afflictions such as these have much claim upon my sympathy.'

I remember I thought that the poverty and distress with which Gordon was so familiar in his everyday surroundings at this time had the effect of making him think there was no other pain in the world but the pain caused by these. Mental pain he ignored entirely, *apparently*.

A little later on he writes :

'I do so verily believe in being perfectly occupied all the day long, and evenings

too. This is a world for work, the other for meditation. (I wish I could give up smoking, which takes up too much time.)'

There were five new forts all being constructed at this time on and down the river. A postscript in one of his letters runs thus :

'P.S.—My boat, as she missed the Hard, struck on a stake to-day, and, knocking a hole in her, sunk ; but we did not get wet. \ If it had been in the middle [of the river], I should be at home to-night in a very bright, happy land, with beautiful sights and glories, and the great comfort of knowing that there could be no further trial. Good-bye. Let us wait in this land till the day after to-morrow, when we will reach it.\



After a visit to us at Chislehurst, followed by many letters, all more or less characteristic, comes this one dated April 24th, 1871, in which he says :

‘ On Easter Sunday I got a letter from Horse Guards, asking me if I would take an appointment which will be vacant in December next. As I should go abroad for certain in April, 1872, and then might fall to any place for a fixed term of years, and as this appointment is at Galatz on the Danube, five days off and well paid, I thought I ought to accept it, and did so ; but it is still so far off that it may not come off, so please not to mention it yet ; I will let you know if I hear anything more on the subject. I am inundated with visitors, and am always going over the Forts with them—batches of twenty-

two sometimes. The appointment is Commissioner for Great Britain on the Danube, and the duty consists of looking after the works at the Soulina branch, for the improvement of the navigation ; there are Commissioners for all the Powers there. I was at Galatz in 1856 for six months. General Besson was there with me ; he was killed at the bridge of Veully on the 9th April (Good Friday). I wrote to Marshal MacMahon, who said by his A.D.C. that it was my old friend.'

And now his life at Gravesend drew towards its close. We had paid him a short visit of a few days at Fort House, as he had told us when we left that he should go to Galatz in September, so in July or August of that year we took a furnished house at Gravesend, very near

his own, and for two or three months again enjoyed his delightful society and friendship before the final separation in October. We and our children spent much time in his lovely garden, where he would join us when not too busy. We helped him when he was sorting out the things he meant to take with him to Galatz, and he gave me several little things to keep; amongst others, his old Diary which he kept when in the Crimea. He tore out several pages first, and then handed it to me, saying it was of no value, but I set a high value on it then, and a higher one now. A portion of it is here reproduced in facsimile, as it may interest my readers.

We used to sit quietly in his room while he wrote his letters, keeping perfect silence till he was ready to talk. We

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday. In the trenches  
furnishing Plan 26<sup>th</sup> Rose  
& Balaklava saw Henry  
& Enderby, very hot Races going  
on evening on duty in the  
trenches went down to advance  
to see work for the night. Captain  
Hill 89<sup>th</sup> left me to port his  
sentries fired on by Russ patrol  
struck & left by men went out  
for him after, but found only his  
coat constant alarms, fired on  
working party with grape from  
Rivets & shot from Creeks.

Bent down 27<sup>th</sup> came up  
from trenches met Jones furnished  
Plan. heard of 1st fire 28<sup>th</sup>

engaged in Plan 29<sup>th</sup> engaged  
on Plan 30<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> went to  
trenches at night to finish  
Plan. met relief at entrance of

took away some of our  
tools & pulled down some  
part of our parapet so  
Raylin & Jones came into  
the trenches where I was on  
duty 24<sup>th</sup> the the next day  
an armistice was granted  
for 2 hours to bury the  
dead, we went out &  
reconnected, a Pr. Officer  
came up & shook hands  
very dirty looking, the moment  
the armistice was over,  
the fog was taken up  
by ~~the fog~~ ~~the fog~~ she did  
not go far from their  
trenches.

were a united trio once more, but only for a time.

When he first knew for certain he was going to leave Fort House he offered me *all* the furniture, saying that no doubt in our large new house, which we had lately built for ourselves at Chislehurst, we should find it useful; but I was greatly amused as the days went on, that almost every time we met he would say, 'Oh, Mrs. F., do you care very much about having that table or those chairs?' etc., etc. 'Mrs. So-and-so would be so glad of them, and I thought you wouldn't mind.' Of course I always replied that I would far rather his poorer friends had the things—which was perfectly true; still, he knew that I wished to have something out of the old house, so the only thing left at last was the drawing-room fender.

And, greatly to my astonishment, one Sunday evening, at about ten o'clock, Gordon walked up to our house with my husband, who had spent the evening with him, carrying in his arms the fender (he would not allow my husband to carry it), which he presented to me with apologies that there was nothing else. I have it still; it is a fender with a history.

After our return to Chislehurst, he wrote :

'I have cast off the anchors now and had a quiet night's rest, which has india-rubbered off a heavy week's work. I went to Foreign Office and saw Mr. Hammond, the Under-Secretary F. O. He was very civil, but knew nothing of my destination, and merely expressed a wish

to see me, in case of having anything to say before I left. I am glad of this, as it shows that the place is not of much import.'

Next from Southampton, September 23rd, 1871 :

'I came down here after two days with my brother in Royal Artillery at Aldershot, and we were much pleased ; but I cannot say I think the Generals worth very much who defended Aldershot. Among them was my friend Sir Charles Staveley,' etc.

Shortly after this he came and spent one evening with us at Chislehurst. The shadow of the parting was over us all, when he suddenly threw out the idea that we should go to Dover for a few days



when he was there, and see him off. This plan was delightful. We went to Dover, and had a nice time there, seeing him every day till he left, and my husband even went as far as to Calais with him, and returned to Dover by the evening boat. Gordon quite thought I would go too, but being a very bad sailor, I could not make up my mind to go, so said good-bye on the pier, and watched the boat as far as I could see it, and the figure that stood so steadfastly looking back as long as he could see me. After that, my husband told me, he joined him on the deck, and they talked of all the past days, and of the history of our friendship from its beginning. It was when lunching with us at Dover he said he felt so glad he was not married, for the pain of parting with a wife would be too great, and he never would have taken a

wife out : he condemned the action of those who did so.

He never settled in England again : there were flying visits, few and far between, but the magnet of the Dark Continent was already preparing to draw him there—the land in which he suffered intensely, the land in which he was to die.

So ended the Gravesend chapter, and now we find him *en route* for Galatz, where he spent the next few years of his life.

## CHAPTER II.

FROM Mayence I received the following letter, dated October 12th, 1871 :

‘ MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘ I wrote you a long letter to-day in the train, on my way from Brussels to this place, and I am sorry to say it has dropped out of the book. I related that I had been invaded by some German “guten-morgen ” ladies, and had been prevented smoking, and some other anecdotes of the Pickel-haubes, who, however, behaved very well to me for a couple of francs

about my baggage at Custom-house. I do not think any place like Great Britain, and I cannot imagine travelling for pleasure in these parts. I said in my lost letter I found I had been often X (which will edify the finders of the letter) to you and Mr. F., and asked consideration. I did not stay at Brussels; I did not care for it, though I dare say it is worth seeing. I saw some violent attacks on the poor exile of Chislehurst, and did not like them. This is a good hotel, and I shall stay here I think over Sunday. How I like England when out of it! There is no place in this world like it, and I suppose all foreigners think the same of their fatherland. The Pickel-haubes look very well, and seem fine soldiers. I hope you found the children well at Chislehurst, where, I suppose, this letter will find you.

^ I look forward to a terminus where there will be no more tickets or baggage or difference of language, where there will be one kingdom, that of Christ, and no more wars.^ I wish I was in a nice quiet nook somewhere, and feel the wish more and more. I read extracts of Lord Byron in Murray, which please me; he was a melancholy, sad man, and I am no better. I do not enjoy life and its glories, but think too deeply of its realities. I left Brussels this morning at 9.30, and got here at the same hour at night.'

And so on, with a few more chatty sentences scarcely, perhaps, worth recording, and the next was written on October 30th, 1871, to me, in reply to one from me telling him of the sudden complete breakdown of my husband's health, which

obliged him to leave business for a long time. Gordon sympathized most deeply in this trial, and, quick to help in all difficulties, wrote the following letter to my husband :

‘GALATZ, *October 31st*, 1871.

‘MY DEAR MR. F.,

‘I would propose to you to come out here as my secretary, where you would not have much to do. The secretary whom Colonel Stokes had is going home, and I could offer you for six months or a year your keep and house-room and £150 per year : this would be about an equivalent for £300. You might leave Mrs. F. and the children in Southampton, and go home as often as you like to pay the expenses. If you like to come, let me know, and come out about middle of December by Vienna, Cracow, Lemberg,

Czenostig Roman. You would be allowed £25 for passage here, and it costs to Vienna £7 4s., mixed ticket to Galatz £7 5s., 2nd class, total £14 10s., so you would have nearly enough to bring out someone with you. You know after Vienna only nobles, English and fools go first class. I was one of the fools. You ought to stay at Neuwied, Vienna, Lemberg, and perhaps a night at Roman, where I would, D.V., meet you. You could bring out a Gravesend laddie with you—little Webster—and I could send him home in the spring; or any other *tractable* person you could find. I need not say you would be welcome; you would find everything *comme il faut* as far as the house is concerned—a harmonium, and horses to ride as much as you like, regular quiet hours with sacrifices of

(pain?)\* every day. Mrs. F. would find Southampton a nice place, and my people know everyone. I think she has tact enough to play the difficult game of keeping in with my family and its various members, and would pay my mother plenty of visits, and hear a good deal on one text, "I DO NOT LIKE." There is a capital doctor here, and you would be very comfortable; lots of "Pickel-haub" civilians and Deutschlanders for you to "sprecken" with. It is a very wonderful thing in falling out thus, that I had a place to offer you, and so good a place, for if you let your house well I scarcely expect, what with one thing and another, you need spend more than £200 per year.

\* Gordon said he never met a flock of sheep without regarding them all as sacrifices, so possibly he refers here to the mutton that could be plentifully supplied for his guest.



You will be able to go home in February, or when you like. The journey could be done in six days easily; shorter than that if you travel day and night. I do not think Mrs. F. could find a better place than Southampton; it is cheap, comparatively, has beautiful environs, and by being a little out of the town you avoid the heavy taxes. If you take any laddie out—I think Willie Webster too small—take Willie or Bill Palmer, of Chalk; he has been a gentleman's groom. Let him know it is only for three or four months, at £3 per month with keep, and let him have, say, from £6 to £8 worth of clothes. I would not keep any English groom here, or, in fact, any English servants at all.

‘ Good-bye, with kind regards to Mrs. F.

‘ Yours sincerely,

‘ C. G. GORDON.

‘If you left England 1st December or 15th November for Neuwied, and came on here so as to be here on the 9th or 10th December, it would suit me—sooner if you like. I do not send you money, as I have not much at present, but shall have in a few days, and if you want £20, you might ask Newsome or Captain Drake, a great friend of mine, at Gravesend. Ask it from him on my account, and tear this bit off to show him I ask the favour.

‘Come on the 1st December if you can.’

Could there have been a kinder, more thoughtful and considerate letter than this—foreseeing every difficulty and smoothing it away, such as that my husband, being in ill-health, would do better to travel with the ex-groom than the little boy of whom he first thought? Antici-

pating, too, there might not be ready cash, as he knew Mr. F. had had some financial troubles—every detail thought out, and kindly and wisely arranged for. But Mr. F. was then too ill to be moved, and so the offer was not accepted.

A few extracts from his next letter from Galatz may prove interesting; it is dated 24th November, 1871. After expressing his disappointment that my husband was not able to go out, and saying he hoped at least in the spring to see him, when, if he could not keep the place open so as to give him a salary, he could at least stay as a visitor as long as he liked, he proceeds to give little details about Galatz, as thus:

‘I have not written to you before, having been away to Sulina and St. George; these are the two southern

mouths of the Danube, about ninety miles from here : they are desolate places, and are in a dreary marsh, as all the Delta is ; but the inhabitants, mostly Russians, are happy and contented, and it will matter little in a few years where they (or we) have pitched their tents. It is pleasant to see the poor Russian laddies delighted at the sight of a large sturgeon their fathers have caught ; they are caught with hooks very sharp and strong, which are attached to floats fixed on a line across the river. The fish, which are six feet long, come down the muddy stream, and getting a prick, they turn sharp round and impale themselves : it is a cruel way of catching them to all appearance. . . . J. Stokes leaves about the 7th December, and I shall make great changes in the establishment ; it is too big for me, and

too many people in it. I have the house on till May, I believe, so I cannot help that—I shall have to take over some £200 worth of things, but will sell a lot, and thus have not much more than £100 to pay him. I shall suffer in the transaction a little, but it is generally fair to help your predecessor.

‘As for the place, I cannot say much for it ; it is semi-civilized, and therefore worse than if thoroughly barbarian. The people are most interesting, and I do not much care for the few English : there is no bond of union yet between me and them ; but I am quite happy and comfortable, have read up a mass of the work, and shall soon finish it. My trial is the remarks that, “ Oh, you will like this and that ”—I feel sure I shall not—also that “ You must *do* this and that,” when I

feel ditto. However, it will come to an end, and there is no paradise on earth; enough for the day its evil.

Then a letter dated from Galatz 29th December, 1871, says :

‘Thanks for your letter of the 15th December, which was here on my return from Bucharest, where I stayed from 23rd to 28th December with the Consul-General, Mr. Green, who with his wife and daughter are very nice people. There are a great number of rumours about which seem to portend troubles out here. You know that in 1866 the Roumanian Government gave through Prince Charles’s influence a railway concession to a Berlin Jew named Stromberg: it was entirely through Prince Charles’s interest it was done, and it was so good a concession

that the railways could have been well made, and four millions profit was likely to be gained : the money was squandered away, and the result was—unfinished lines, the Roumanian Government refused to pay the interest on the bonds, and Bismarck has taken up the question, and a day before I arrived at Bucharest the Porte sent a telegram to Prince Charles telling him that the German Government having referred to their Sultan, he desired that the matter might be settled at once, or serious consequences would ensue. The Roumanian agent at Constantinople sent also to say that Russia and Austria had joined Prussia in the affair, and that a foreign occupation would result if they did not give in ; the Chambers are disputing over the matter, and it is doubtful how it will go : if they give in, they will

be left alone ; if not, we shall have a foreign army here ; if they give in they will vent their rage on Prince Charles, and if they drive him out they will have a foreign intervention, so things look troubled. You will know this long before this reaches you. The Roumanians are very bad legislators : they have had twenty-two changes of ministry since 1858 ! It is astonishing what Russia is about ; *on dit* that it was settled at Gastein that Austria should have the principalities, and, it may be, Bismarck will do the Russians as he did the French. . . . Bucharest is a gay (to me very stupid) place, and I only went there to see the Russian and Austrian Commissioners. . . .

‘ I wish they (that is the little Freeses) could see Nautchi the gander ; he is a splendid fellow. This is his usual posi-



tion, bullying everyone — turkeys, dogs, etc.

(Here followed a drawing of Nautchi in an angry attitude.)

Again in February, 1872 :

‘ . . . Eight years ago, one bright Sunday morning, I went out to a hill-top in this same month to read a letter from home, which told me that God had gathered of our flock one brother. Two years ago, the same month, with snow on the ground, I sat with the dying Sir W. Gordon, and to-day finds me in much the same weather with a telegram announcing the death of my youngest brother. My brother, who was not over-strong, was very anxious-minded, and died from weakness. I now reproach myself for not having been oftener with him, but these are

useless regrets. . . . 'All repining is rebellion, and can do no good. Look on all events thus.' Would you have them altered? If we would, we put ourselves in the position of Alphonso X. of Spain, who said, if he had been with God at the creation of the world, he would have advised Him better. . . . It is sorrow indeed to think that we will no more see the face we love, and the more especially so when, as in my brother's case, I had hoped to have been instrumental in helping with his large family. Another escutcheon filled up after me in the tomb! Fifty years will see them all filled up. My sister was with my brother when he died. I have no news except by telegram.

'On Tuesday last, the 30th January, I got a letter from my brother-in-law, saying my sister had gone up to Freddy, who was

ill. My brother-in-law said there was nothing particularly the matter, but that he was weak and had tried too many quack remedies. I telegraphed for an answer to my enquiry of how he was, and heard, "No hope of recovery"; in meantime other letters came, saying he was better; but of course I knew the worst, and these poor dear letters were only bitter to me, for they showed me that the hopes expressed (in them) of my dear brother were doomed to disappointment. Poor souls! it seemed as if I were behind the scenes of the future; others then came saying he was doing well, but "No hope of recovery" gave me full assurance it was over, and that he had gone home. I dare say to-morrow letters will say they begin to realize his state, and then others will come with the final news.

‘ Like me and all of us, he was a bad patient, and I dare say, poor dear fellow, he often lamented over his shortcomings in this particular. ‘ Oh! when I leave this world, let me go quietly; do not torment me with those kind offices which are so trying to the departing; it is no sad departing—those who leave are nearer than if they were here. . . . There is little indeed to tell you from this place. I live very quietly, and do not see many people, and have little to do. The days pass by and nights come, without any incidents to relate; it does not matter where one’s time may be passed here when it is past, and we make for ourselves many more trials than are our lot.’

Another time:

‘ I often wonder why I am here, for I

have so little to do, and so few people I can talk to ; however, it is well paid, and I am quite happy for the short space that is left.'

Later on he writes :

' I have just come back from the Kilia branch of the Danube, and visited Ismail and Kilia, the two fortresses the Russians blew up contrary to the treaty in 1856. They were bound to hand them over intact. They used to keep large garrisons in these places, and now the towns are quite ruined and deserted, and the people very discontented. They lament the Russians, who foment all troubles, and rumour says Russia will soon make a move to get the strip of Bessarabia back again. It is suggestive, wandering through

the ruins on which so much money was spent, and to think of the pomp and glory of the past ; the long avenues and public gardens, now deserted, speak volumes of the sorrows of men ; all these parts are historic and interesting. The Russians pay the priests of these parts, and prevent any rule being possible over the people. There are great rows here about the Pacha and the Russian Consul, and an Imperial Commissioner has come to inquire into them ; it is difficult to keep clear of them. The heat is not great, but there is not much to do, and one perhaps feels it the more. Staveley kindly offered me a place on his staff at the manœuvres, but I cannot go.'

The next letter worth recording is dated December 20th, 1872 :

‘MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘Between you and me and your spouse, I passed in the early hours of this morning your abode, when you were all in the arms of Morpheus. I heard you all snoring. I got down here (at Southampton) at 2 p.m., and write these lines to wish you a happy season. Hope the chicks are all well; kind love to them and to Mr. F., and believe me,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.

‘P.S.—I am A.D.C. in close attendance; no chance of getting away for a month.’

This close attendance was on his mother, who was only too delighted to have him with her again, and although he spoke of not being able to get away for a

month, yet on the 9th January, 1873, he wrote to say he was coming to see us at 8.45 on Sunday, and would stay till 9.34 Monday morning. So once more on that Sunday we three met again and renewed our old intimacy and talked of everything, he all joke and geniality. He went to church with us in the morning, the next day returned to Southampton. He told us he considered himself shelved at Galatz, and wondered why. I told him I believed he was like Moses, who had eighty years in the desert in which to be prepared for his great work, and that like him he (Gordon) was being prepared in solitude and loneliness for some great work that he was yet to do, and this prophecy was justified by after-events.

Gordon came to see us, bringing his brother, Sir Henry, with him, at the time



that the Emperor Louis Napoleon was lying in state at Camden House. They wished to leave their cards at the Lodge, so we all walked up the hill together. We were very full of spirits, being so glad to meet again, and went laughing and joking up the hill; but it was very characteristic of Gordon that as we neared the gate he suddenly became quite grave, and said to me, 'You must not be so hilarious,' and our tone moderated at once.

He had always felt much for the Emperor, and liked to hear all we could tell him of his days at Chislehurst. He asked me to get him a photo of Camden House and one of the Emperor, and also some violets off the sarcophagus, or, rather, the funeral pall, as the sarcophagus was not then made. I forget how I managed it, but I did get some, which he sent to

some French officers who had, I believe, been fellow-comrades of his in the Crimea. After the lying-in-state came the day of the Emperor's funeral, and Gordon wrote to me afterwards :

‘ I was at the funeral ! Could not resist it ; came down by 9 a.m. train, and left at 11.15 a.m. Do not be vexed at my not coming to you, but I had an appointment in London and could not spare time ; besides, I do not know why, I felt it much and wanted to be alone. . . . I think the Emperor was a kind-hearted, unprincipled man, a man who in the respectable world was a bad man,’ etc.

Shortly after this Gordon left again for Galatz ; he came down to see us the day he left. He came to breakfast, and after burying some half-crowns in the garden

for my little boys, with strict injunctions that they were not to be dug up till the next day, he went away, just sending me a postcard with nothing on it but this:

‘Ps. cxxi.’

On February 3rd, 1873, he wrote from Galatz:

‘MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘I arrived here this morning at 6 a.m., having left the night of the day I saw you and Mr. F. and the chicks. Had to stay twelve hours at Berlin; saw the Kaiser and got a gracious bow for taking off my hat. He was driving in Unterden-Linden with no out-riders. I looked at his old face, and thought of the herald who will turn it to wax, like that poor wearied one now lying near you, when he

too will be a loathing to all, and the meanest of his people will be better than he—a little stage, and the part is soon acted. 'Unter-den-Linden is a fine strasse.' And here the letter gives a long description of the statues on the bridge. Then he says: 'I do not know, but they seem a hard people, or rather their rulers are so. . . . I have nothing much of interest to relate. Cracow is full of mouldering greatness, and is a quaint town. In its cathedral are the great ones of Poland looking upwards, waiting the great trump which will awake us all, around which are the barracks of the little Austrian soldiers, who one cannot see without thinking of that terrible rout of Königsgratz. I was not expected, but have got through a lot of calls. The streets are so deserted it seems like an empty town; however, I,

have had a kind reception from all my friends. The Danube is not frozen, and I go down (D.V.) to Toultscha on Thursday,' and so on.

On May 4th, 1873, he writes :

'I am getting on with my plan, and hope to complete it this year, and then !!! I think I shall say good-bye to the Danube. I cannot stand this enforced idleness, even when well paid as it is.

'Poor little souls' (this was an allusion to my children), 'going to school! it is the beginning of their troubles. Before that period they think everything is smooth sailing, and it comes with such a shock to them to see that it is a battling world. . . . I have no doubt of the present state of man being the incarnation of pre-existent spirits learning God in the flesh.' As man we

belong to earth, as spirits we belong to God.'

The following letter may be of interest :

' SEVASTOPOL, 8th September.

' KERTCH, 13th            ,,

' CONSTANTINOPLE, 18th    ,,

' MY DEAR MRS. F.,

' We have been to the Crimea and have just returned, and are in quarantine for eight days. We had a very pleasant trip ; General Adye is a particularly agreeable companion, and the *Antelope* gunboat is very comfortable. The Russians were very much surprised at our coming, and did not like it much ; they were polite, and that is all. \ Our cemeteries are in a very bad state, through neglect, and through the Tartars digging up the bodies for rings, buttons, etc. \ The body of Sir

R. Newman has been out of the grave more than once. The town is still in a state of ruin; very little has been done to repair it. We saw the troops, which did not look much improved; they were—with their officers—very grubby. They seem to feel very vicious with the Germans, and think the Emperor very wrong to be so friendly. I have no doubt that this is the true feeling, for they are conscious there can be nothing in common between the two nations.

‘ We went to Kertch, and passed the fortifications so much talked about. They might have secured the passage of the straits of the Sea of Azof for a much less sum than that expended. The Russians themselves think it a great mistake. The Russians have built a magnificent chapel in one of the cemeteries, where 40,000 of

the dead are buried. I send you a photograph of Gortschakoff's monument, which was put up by his widow, and cost £2,000. He was brought from Warsaw and buried there. The French dug up all their dead and collected the bones, and buried them in seventeen large mausoleums. They found some of the bodies not decomposed, and they had to take the flesh off! I send Eddie some flowers from the Malakoff and Redan.

'I come home (D.V.) for a week in the end of September, and shall come home for good in March; but it will depend on circumstances if I go abroad again in a year or so.'

The next letter, dated from 5, Rockstone Place, Southampton, 5th October, 1873, begins:



‘ MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘ Did you not feel a certain emotion last night at 5.20 p.m.? Ask Mr. F. if he did not, for at that hour I looked at your nest. I have come home for five days to see my mother, who, you know, has had a paralytic stroke. She scarcely knows me, and her whole affection is devoted to my sister. I feel so glad of it. . . .

‘ I came home in three days and a half, close on 1,700 miles, without any stopping to speak of. I am truly sorry to say I shall not see you both this time, but my visit is here, and I cannot think of moving from it till I start finally next Saturday. Hope the little flock are well—kind love to them. . . .

‘ Believe me, my dear friends,’ etc.

On Saturday, 11th October, 1873:

‘MY DEAR MRS. F.,

‘Sorry indeed not to have seen you and Mr. F. I left my mother, happily without suffering, but evidently on her route to the Better Land.’ My sister bears up very well, I am glad to say. I will write to you from Galatz.

‘Saturday, 7 p.m., Brussels.

‘Monday, 7 a.m., Hszolowitz.

‘Monday, 7 p.m., Cracow (1,500 miles).

‘Tuesday, 7 a.m., Lemberg.

‘Tuesday, 7 p.m., near Galatz.’

This extract is made to show how he really flew about the country. Such was also his custom afterwards in Africa, just as it had been in China, where he was always turning up unexpectedly, when the enemy had thought him many miles distant.

From Galatz shortly after he writes on November 15th, 1873, amongst other things the following :

‘The other day I wrote to our Inspector-General, and said I hoped he did not think I felt any way ungrateful for his treatment of me, and that I was afraid he would have been pained at seeing some letters in the papers implying neglect of me. The man who wrote the letters wrote to me the other day, and is sorry I am vexed at the letters being written, etc., etc., obliging me to write explanations to him in return. Again I wrote to Colonel Kerr, saying that the R.E. are using my case to push their higher officers. It was ungenerous on my part to say so, and still worse when Kerr told an old friend of mine, an R.E., of it, and he has written to

me about it—another explanation from me to him. If I had not written as my thoughts came, I should have saved this hurting people's feelings who meant kindly to me.

‘Idleness and discontent are our great difficulties. I cannot help comparing the peasantry of these parts with civilized England; enough to eat, and not over-hard work, no fear of future for the children, no bother with the schools they should go to. Early to bed and early to rise, they fulfil their portion in this life, and God cares for them as much as for us. From their hearts I think more grateful incense arises than from the better off in our own land. The families live and die together, do not scatter over the earth, husbands leaving wives, sons their parents. It is all for the best, yet if one could hear

the murmurs of our people it would be one great roar of discontent.'

Shortly after this Gordon's stay at Galatz came to a close. He came to London, and early in the January of 1874 we again had the joy of seeing him under our roof before his departure for Egypt. On the 17th January he sent me a note, beginning in his humorous way thus :

'MY DEAR MRS. F.,

'The Hegira takes place Wednesday, and I write a few lines to bid you and Mr. F. adieu, and to wish you all every kind wish. I will write now and then from the Equator.'

Another letter on the 20th, and then a postcard on the 28th (his birthday), and then the new chapter of his life in Africa

had begun. On the postcard he had drawn a lonely desert path, which led up higher and higher to the sun, which was rather low on the horizon. One solitary traveller was walking on the lonely path, his eyes fixed upon the distant sun, and on the card was written merely this :

‘28, 1, 1874.

‘Isaiah 35. Good-bye.—C. G. GORDON.’

I received it with both sadness and pleasure.

So now Gordon has entered on the last ten years of his life, years in which were his most terrible trials, years of endurance and of conflict, comprising all kinds of fighting—physical, mental, and moral—years in which his patience and courage were tried to the utmost, years in which he was tested by fire and came out gold.

I will make extracts occasionally from the letters of any parts I think may be interesting to the general reader, and if it reads a little scrappy, and perhaps sometimes disconnected, the reader will forgive it, for I prefer to record his words just as he wrote them, and so get peeps at his mind and character which could be got in no other way.

The first letter after he went to Africa was dated Sanbat, August 3rd, 1874. After speaking of various other matters, he continues :

‘ I have been here six weeks waiting and waiting for a convoy of slaves, which the slavers in a mean way are trying to pass down behind me, making a detour. After a great deal of trouble, I have been able to come across their road and have

caught them. They say there are 900 slaves and 2,000 cows which they have robbed from the natives. It is a great thing for me, and quite repays my long sojourn in this marsh. You will perhaps think the slaves will be very glad; some few may be, but I expect the greater number will be sorry. In spite of what Livingstone says, I do not myself find about here that any affection exists between the parents and children; there is a mutual pleasure in parting with one another. I think the slavers' wars—made for the purpose of taking slaves—detestable, but if a father or mother of their own free will, and with the will of the child, sells that child, I do not see the objection to it. It was and is the wholesale depopulation of districts which makes slavery such a curse, and also the numbers



killed, or who perish in the collection of slaves.

‘ A fair and properly conducted emigration would be the best thing for these parts, and I think the blacks would respond gladly to such a scheme. It will be a very, very long time before much can be done to civilize them in these parts ; the climate is against it, and there can be no trade, for they have nothing to exchange for goods. Poor creatures, they would like to be left alone. The Arabs hate these parts, and all the troops (Egyptian) are sent up here for punishment. Their constitution, unlike ours, cannot stand the wet and damp or the dulness of their life ; I prefer it infinitely to going out to dinner in England, and have kept my health exceedingly well. I have had only two batches of letters since

I came up from Cairo. If the climate would suit, it would do your husband a mint of good, this quiet, monotonous life, if he could bear it; for young men it is deadening, but if you have passed the meridian, and can estimate life at its proper value, *i.e.*, as a probation, then the quiet is enjoyable. It is our own faults we are so discontented; we throw away the best years of our existence in trying for a time which will never come, when we will have enough to content us. I am sure it is the secret of true happiness to be content with what we actually have. Of course you may preach this (and it has been preached for ages), and never be listened to; we raise our own goblins, and as soon as one is laid we raise another.

‘I agree that I have not patience with the groans of half the world, and declare

I think there is more happiness amongst these miserable blacks, who have but a meal from day to day, than among our own middle classes. The blacks are glad of a little handful of maize, and live in the greatest discomfort; they have not a strip to cover them, but you do not see them grunting and groaning all day long, as you do scores and scores in England, with their wretched dinner-parties and attempts at gaiety when all is hollow and miserable. If they have one thing, they have not another; better bring up their children to a trade than let them follow their fathers' sad lives.

‘There would be no one so unwelcome to come and reside in this world as our Saviour while the world is in the state it is now. He would be dead against nearly all our pursuits, and be altogether *outré*!

‘A month ago and more I sent up six steamers to Gondokoro, and they ought to have been back a fortnight, or at any rate a week ago, and they are not yet here. I cannot help it, and I suppose it is for the best, so I am quiet. I took a poor old bag of bones into my camp a month ago, and have been feeding her up, but yesterday she was quietly taken off, and now knows all things! She had her tobacco up to the last, and died quite quietly. What a change from her misery! I suppose she filled her place in life as well as Queen Elizabeth! What a hardship it would have been to have had her lot in life! It is blowing a gale, and has been raining as it does only in the tropics; the whole of the country, being flat, is flooded, and the pleasure is great! Here is a sketch of my station at the

Sanbat' (here follows a sketch of buildings, trees, Nile, and flat marsh, etc.). 'And now it is raining again to spoil my letter and drive me down below.'

(Here follows sketch of hut.)

Again :

'I am on board a steamer, having just come back from looking after a convoy which is due from Khartoum. A wretched *sister* of yours is struggling up the road, but she is such a wisp of bones that the wind threatens to overthrow her. She has halted, preferring the rain to being cast down—if she were, I verily believe she could not get up again. I have sent her some dhoora, and will produce a spurt of joy in her black and withered carcase. She has not even a cotton gown on, and

I do not think her apparel would be worth  $\frac{1}{50}$ th of a penny.

‘ Good-bye and kind regards,’ etc.

‘ 4th August, 1874.

‘ P.S.—I am bound to give you the sequel of the lady whom I helped yesterday in a gale of wind. I had told my man to see her into one of the huts, and thought he had done so. The night was stormy and rainy, and when I awoke I heard the crying of a child near my hut outside the enclosure. When I had got up I went out to see what it was, and peeping through the gateway I saw your and my sister lying dead in a pool of mud. Her black brothers had been passing and passing, and had taken no notice of her, so I sent and ordered her to be buried and went on. In the midst of the high

grass was a baby about a year or so old, left by itself; it had been out all night in the rain, and had been left by its mother. I carried it in, and seeing the corpse was not moved, I sent again about it, and went with the man to have it buried. To my surprise and astonishment she was alive. After a considerable trouble I got her black brothers to lift her out of the mud, poured some brandy down her throat, and got her into a hut with a fire, having the mud washed out of her sightless eyes. She was not more than sixteen years old. There she now lies. 'I cannot help hoping she is floating down with the tide to her haven of rest.' The baby is taken care of by another family for a certain consideration of maize per diem.'

‘ August 5th.

‘ The rag is still alive ; the baby, who is not a year old, seized a gourd of milk and drank it off like a man last night, and is apparently in for the pilgrimage of life. It does not seem the worse for its night out—depraved little wretch !

‘ I do not think I ever saw such a tumble-down lot as the Arabs are. The slightest pain or ache, and down they are in *articulo mortis*—you never saw such a limp-backed lot. A man with a headache cannot lift his hand to have his pulse felt. \ How they were ever a great people I cannot conceive. \ One point in their favour is their great patience. They apparently tumble down as being sure they cannot fall lower. \ The barometer of people’s lives is like the barometer in physical science—ups and downs. \ It would cure



a good many, a year out here. They would appreciate a *clean* meal, at any rate, and fresh air and a bed, and not to have to retire to roost the very minute the sun is down (it is odd, I never have slept such intensely sound sleep as I do in these parts). The rats are dreadful in the steamers, circus all night over you and around you, and if you leave a book out, off will go the rats with some dozen pages. They nearly dragged a towel through their hole last night. You know, they took my new shaving-brush and tablet of soap, so they are fitting up their dressing-table. Now, you cannot get soap or shaving-brushes up here, so it is a loss to me. However, I survive it and flourish. We have been flooded out of our station, and obliged to evacuate it. It is a sore blow, for I thought it such a good position.

‘How are the P.’s? I suppose still at Gravesend — that delightful place. Do you remember our walk on a Sunday, and meeting the people coming out of church? It was very bad of us. Good-bye again.

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.’

‘5th August, 1874.

‘Just a line. I hope you won’t fret— your black sister departed this life at 4 p.m., deeply lamented by me; not so by her black brothers, who thought her a nuisance. When I went to see her this morning I heard the lamentations of something on the other side of the hut. I went round and found one of our species, a visitor of ten or twelve months to this globe, lying in a pool of mud (I am not sure he was not less in age, for he

had creases on him). I said, "Here is another foundling!" and had it taken up. Its mother came up afterwards, and I mildly expostulated with her, remarking, however good it might be for the spawn of frogs, it was not good for our species. The creature after this drank milk with avidity.'

' RAGEEF,  
' 16 miles S. of GONDOKORO.

' MY DEAR MRS. F.,

' I must write you a line to keep you and Mr. F. informed of my whereabouts. I left the Sanbat about 23rd August, and got to Gondokoro 3rd September. I am going to change my station at Gondokoro from that marshy spot to one near Mount Rageef, four miles from this. It is nice high land, and a much better climate. The foot of the rocky bed of

the Nile begins here. It is not navigable for seventy miles, then it is said to be navigable to the lake.' (Here he sketches Mount Rageef, and then the position of Dufli.) 'Out of a party of Europeans you see the result—

Myself—well.

Kemp—well.

Gessi—been very ill.

Linant

De Witt } dead.

Anson }

Russell

Campbell } invalided.

Berndorff—been very ill.

Munges—invalided.

'We left Khartoum on 1st June, and this was our state on the 16th September, and all these had every care taken of them. How many would have come out (had I let them), and how few could have stayed here! The stomach is the cause of all this sickness, *i.e.*, carelessness in eat-

ing, and not watching the first attacks of fever. The only effect I have experienced is a great shortness of temper, which distresses me, and much more those around me ; but I *have* been much worried by the staff, and in other ways, and I think the shortness of temper acted like quinine on some of them.

‘ The steamer intended for the lake left this by road yesterday to go up to Dufli, the head of the Falls, there to be put together and go on the lake. This is a nice place enough. I am quite alone, for my German Berndorff has gone to Gondokoro. Not knowing Arabic, I cannot be bothered, and it is a comfort, for no one can speak a word else, and I will *not* understand unless I like it. It is bright moonlight, and hippopotami, great fat creatures, have come out on the island

opposite. You can see their fat sides gleaming from the water they have come out of, in the moonlight. They make such a fat grunting noise, as if they did like it so much. They were much annoyed last night when I fired at them. The blacks about here are an uninteresting lot. Baker took their cows, but I have made friends with them, and they have forgiven it. A lot of the Niam Niam tribe are here. The ladies wear a bunch of leaves as full dress ; they are not a bit interested in me or I in them, or, indeed, in the blacks at all. Some wear one scrap, some another. Some pierce their upper lip, and put in a piece of glass ; some pierce their ears all round, and put in bits of wood ; but they are all black and uncouth creatures, they do not like anything but themselves. After receiving

your presents they get up and walk off without a word or motion of thanks. Perhaps they are honest, and do not care to express what they do not feel. . . . My new station will be a pretty one.' (Here follows a sketch of the station.)

'The steamer will go up the west branch of the Nile, and not the east bank, as Baker tried that, and was bad friends with natives. Such a lone country, grass and trees; the huts of natives are very low, like this' (here follows sketch of hut); 'you have to go in, *if you want to*, on your hands and knees; they seem happy enough, and are pretty fat. They loll about all day, plant just enough maize for their wants, and have one or two cows each which they never kill, but bleed periodically; they are resentful and treacherous according to

all accounts ; they come and dance war-like dances for you sometimes, which do not interest me much, so I give over the honour to my subs. They are great with their drums—beat them all night, and they talk with one another by means of them ; for instance, I went out six miles to-day, and where I was stopping a man went to his cabin and beat his drum with regular strokes ; this brought all the niggers together to see what it was about. In a few minutes they could raise the country for miles round. I should think this would be a capital country for pâtés de foie gras ; it is nice and hot, and moist as well. I am much bothered with my guards—they pursue me if I move a yard, and I in vain try to evade them, in order not to hurt their feelings by sending them back ; it is a regular queen-bee system.



I only went out just now to look if I could see my silver-sided hippos near here, as I heard a squelching noise in the reeds, and of course I heard a cough, and, looking round, was aware I had no business out without them. There is a hippo saying, Humph, humph, humpff, humpffts, close by; but he is in the water, for they are silent when on land. There are lots of geese about; I killed four in a few minutes yesterday, such pretty birds. My cook went away ill—he was a poor creature at the best of times—and now I have a black lad who does very well, and two mosquito-like scraps of shillocks who stagger under a few pounds' weight; they are amusing little creatures about nine years of age, hate one another, and run like mad to fulfil your wishes if they know them by signs; they have now learned to do

a good deal for one. One went up Mount Rageef (a very dangerous hill to go up) with me, and he triumphs over the other, pointing to me and himself, and saying, "We two went up, and you" (the other one) did not." It is a sore trial for the other; neither of them had seen a hill before they came up here.

' Been reading a lot of old newspapers to-day. Baker left here 5th September, 1870—surrender of Emperor—also *Illustrated London News*—picture of Emperor leaving Paris for the war! How little we know what a few months may bring us! and with what slight anchorage should we hold to this world! In Linant's journal he wrote on arrival at Gondokoro "Finished." He was well then; little more than a month after that he was laid in his last home. Anson was only twenty-three years of

age ; he would come out, and left a place in Post-office to come. He never reached Gondokoro, but lies in an ant-hill, the only dry ground there was on the banks of the Nile.

‘ The presents to the Sheiks or native chiefs are perplexing ; all must have alike. You need no interpreter to see their dissatisfaction if they are not content ; their look is enough, and says plainly, “ This is tawdry and flimsy and not half as good as my neighbour’s.” It is like the G.C.B. and K.C.B. : if the other had had the same, he would have been well contented. I am glad to say I have done all the salaaming for a time ; my black Mudir enjoys it, and has enough of it : they are rather afraid of me from high to low, owing to that shortness of temper alluded to. I have given the men Friday, the

Mussulman Sunday, as a holiday, and have got a Ulema here for them; better have some worship than none at all, and there is little chance of Mr. Murray coming out here. . . .

‘Squelching noise still going on, but no hippos to be seen. I have no more to say, so shall retire to my couch.’

*‘September 28th.*

‘Still here near Rageef, but move down to the new site to-day. Tremendous thunderstorms; I think two slight shocks of earthquake.’

‘GONDOKORO,

*‘17th November, 1874.*

‘Yesterday your letter of 26th June came to me here, brought up by two officers who have joined me; it is all the fault of my agent at Cairo, whom I shall not

keep on, so please address your letters in future to me at *Khartoum*, the *Soudan*.

‘Abou Lamed came out and rose to a high point, but fell after three weeks. He altogether behaved very badly, and did not think I dared get rid of him; it was a long story, what with his intrigues afterwards, and one thing and another, and I cannot go over it again; however, his fall was very rapid when once I saw whom I had to deal with. He certainly had every opportunity to do well, and every inducement; but his nature was too much bent on that wretched money for him to do anything good. If Baker had been wise, he would never have written his objections to his going with me, for he might have given me credit, if the man did not do good work, it was nearly certain I should have found him

out and sent him off; but he wanted to monopolize the whole slavery question, and also these countries, and so pulled the string of a shower-bath he did not expect. Baker is fifty-five; in fifteen years he may daily expect his call home, and then what value will it be to him whether the world thought or did not think he did much up here or not? I have not much to tell you, I am doing well in the province, and if He wills will prosper. I do my best and keep my health; many have died: Linant, De Witt, Anson, Campbell, dead; Russell, Menzies, invalided, out of ten; and I and another are the only ones who have escaped the fever. Two new officers found me yesterday, and Linant's brother. I have hopes of getting my boat on to the lake soon. I have letters from Baker, and have answered him, and am sure that,

though bitter like quinine, they will do him good.

‘I have so many letters to write that you will excuse this short one. I have so little beyond the current events of the day to tell you that I cannot make up a long letter. Believe me,’ etc.

From Rageef on April 12th, 1875, he writes :

‘I have, I hope, the good fortune to find some of my difficulties over, viz., that the Nile is navigable for some much greater distance than it was thought to be. You know it was supposed to be quite impassable between this and Apuddo, 165 (?) miles off. I hope, from what we have seen, that it will not be so for more than fifteen miles between Apuddo and the Ascea; this will be, if it turns out so,

a great thing for me in every way. I have seen Beddin, and he is now quite friendly; he is a poor old man, half blind. I am quite well, thank God, but tired enough of the wear and tear of the troops (who are enough to try a saint), and their wants, etc. You ought to read Baker's book; it is well-written and amusing. He was foolish in writing it, for the truth will surely come out.'

Extract from letter dated Bedden, May 5th, 1875 :

'No; the shortness of temper is *evilness*, not illness, and I fear I am a tyrant in heart—such fighting and anger, and all that beautiful calmness disappears completely. Baker still corresponds, but either my last will be the end or the beginning of a new series. Mr. William Baker's



publisher said to a Mr. Waller, who *kindly* told me, that Baker considered I disparaged his work, so I went at Baker, and gave him my mind about it kindly, but telling him that *I* did not care what people said, and that he should do the same.'

On 29th June, 1875, he writes :

'I have since I last wrote got three large boats over the rapids of Bedden, and pursued my way south twenty-three miles to Kerri to Ascea River, in order to complete my communications with the south of the province; the river from Bedden to Kerri is very good, only the current is very strong—the natives favourable and friendly. I left Kerri on the 12th June, and came down here by river in nine and a half hours. It would take five

days to do it by land. This blessing of finding the river navigable when it was supposed to be impassable is an enormous blessing to me. I shall, I hope, make one more station between Kerri and the Ascea, where I have a station at present, and for this purpose I came down for some stores, etc. Imagine my horror at finding no steamer here; I have had only one up here since I left Sanbat in February. It is now 129 days since they were all at Khartoum, and through some mishap or mistake, there they appear to have stayed. . . . I feel much the want of something to do; I have been working at a lot of things, but cannot fully employ my time. I go to bed at 8 p.m., but rise at daybreak; it is very dull work. One cannot tell what a blessing employment is till one loses it—like one's health. I have

written a paper, and sent it to my sister. Ask her for it if you care to read it. . . .

‘Inaction to me is terrible, and I really do not know what on earth to do from morn till night, and this is indeed the more trying, as I have so much to do before the next two months are over, after which the rain falls. I feel sure that the tedium of this life does as much to make people ill as the malaria. It is a country of delays. At the last moment, those one has to deal with discover that they have this or that left undone, when they have been weeks utterly idle, and they will repeat the same thing at your next start. The felucca or small boat rudder is always out of repair; when you get in the boat the rowel pins on which your oars rest are never fastened in properly; however, experience has put me up to their tricks.’

October 2nd, 1875, from Laboré, he writes :

‘We have finished the line of ports from Lardo to Mahidi, and got the 108-ton steamer to Moogie, and will, I hope, get her and another on to the lake in the next rainy season. The hostility of the natives has delayed me much, but they are now subdued on the left bank, and I only wait till the grass is dry enough to burn, to do ditto on the right bank, where they killed thirty-eight officers and men and a Monsieur Linant a month ago, through the too great dispersion of these men, by which they were fallen upon separately and killed. I have had such an accumulation of worries that I have not yet recovered from the effects of them. Everything seemed to go wrong, and yet

when I come to think of it, we have been only two months opening this route, which is little enough, and I ought to be more grateful. M. was at school with me ; he was a clever fellow, but wanted always a kick from someone to make him reap the advantage of his talents, and when he did not get that kick he never moved, and so he has not progressed much. His religion is a gloomy one, I fear ; at least, it was so. I hope I see the end of my troubles here, but as I cannot act shabbily to Khedive, I do not know how long I may have to stay. At any rate, I shall, I hope, know in three months' time when my term of service is to be at an end, for I have asked the question.'

1st November, 1875, he writes :

' I have completed my communications

between the north and south of the Province. These parts had hitherto been separated by a distance of one hundred miles, which you could not traverse except with a very large escort, and then with difficulty, for in the dry season you were parched and in the wet season you were drowned. I had been buoyed up with hopes that I should have found the Nile navigable for this distance, but find, however, a rapid near here I cannot get up. However, ninety miles of the hundred hitherto thought impracticable are available for transport. At present I am perforce resting till my stations consolidate themselves, and till the jungle grass, which is eight feet high and covers the country, is dry enough to burn, for now it renders all movement difficult and very disagreeable; this will be in three weeks' time. There

were two prominent matters I had to do when I undertook this work: the one was to establish a safe road from the north to the south of the province, and the other was to convey from the north to the south a steamer in sections, destined to be put together for the lake in south of province. I have, thank God, now established the road from north to south, and have the sections of the steamer more than half-way there, so there remains only the putting together of the steamer when it arrives, and my two objects are attained, and I bid adieu to this land. It is, however, impossible to say how long this work will take for, obstacles are as luxuriant in these parts as the jungle grass. However, it is something to see at least two-thirds of my work done, and it has been very trying to me. I have

now no European with me, and my Arab interpreter, a doctor, died the 14th October, and so I am now without interpreter; however, I get on very well, and have but little difficulty in understanding the heads of subjects. I have given up all idea of making these soldiers anything like what they should be, for it is perfectly hopeless in every way. The whole of them are, to my mind, incapable of improvement; and the only way they should be governed should be by the whip. Now, however, that I have accepted the inutility of improving them, I merely content myself with ousting any of the officers who retard me, and putting them into holes and corners till I leave, when they may emerge if they like. As it is no use talking to them, or expecting them to possess reasoning powers, the first or



second offence sees them shunted into obscurity, never to cross me again, and the substitution of others in their places. I am not going to be retarded up here by the inaction or stupidity of incapable men. I make friends with the natives, and one of these wretched little mushrooms will spoil all my work by his obstinacy and self-importance, and oblige me to go through it again. The numbers who have been eclipsed thus you would scarcely believe, and I do not think many men would have dared to act so; but I dare, because in the first place it is to me a matter of supreme indifference if Cairo is pleased or not, or if I am recalled or not. I know that single-handed, and with very little human help at all, I have done a good work for the Khedive, and that my action towards these obstructive people is

not dictated by anything but for the general weal of all; and secondly that, although I say it, if Khedive removed me, he would be by far a greater loser than I should be, for I should be only too happy to leave, if I could see my way to do so with honour, which honour I do not see till the afore-mentioned programme is completed. . . . I see nothing to encourage the hope that the occupation of these lands will be of any advantage towards civilizing them, and in excuse for taking this employ, I can only say that I think I have accomplished a work (with the merely minimum amount of suffering to natives and soldiers) which would have been done in a longer period by an Arab Pasha with a great amount of suffering to natives and soldiers, and now I have done that long story.

‘Imagine to yourself for fifties of miles a sea of high grass (six to eight feet high), through which the very narrow paths are with difficulty discernible; no shooting, for you can see nothing; the seeds of the grass are most affectionate, and very sharp, and penetrate your clothes in all directions. We have some £45,000 worth of ivory, which little by little I am sending down the new road; it is with the niggardliness and obstinacy and wilfulness of the officers of the station écheloned along the road that my wars take place; they are so essentially selfish that they will not feed the porters, so that the porters do not care to make a second journey: one station will abound, and will never help another. I have now a system of spies who tell me what are in the magazines at each station, so that I come

down on a full station and leave it bare. Then, again, a party starts from station A to station B. The chief of station A will give no food for the route, so the party pillages natives; natives form ambuscades, and kill one or two soldiers—all this in spite of positive orders. What can you do with such people? The civilizers of others!!! I gloat over the inevitable troubles which their inattention will produce on my departure, and cannot help it, they have tried me too much—so much so that I cannot bear the sight of them; and I believe they would revolt if they did not feel sure I was just to them, and that I had much ameliorated their condition, and that there is almost a certainty that any change would be for the worse.

‘Whether it is wrong or not, I have

been building castles in the air as to my return to England. All depends on the Khedive's answer. I hear he is getting elephants from India, and fear he may want me to stay; on the other hand, he has not written to me for nine months, and though I write continually, I never get a reply; not that I need one as far as instructions go, but it would be mere politeness to acknowledge one's letters and existence. The hope of getting out of this continual worry, of being rid of numerous obligations which my spirit revolts from, and which I am compelled to fulfil in order to keep my troops alive, quite invigorates me. One works with only a half heart when you feel your work is likely to be of no great good to the people of these parts, and altogether I much doubt the justice of our proceedings.

If *we* conquered the country, *we* would at least in some measure benefit the conquered; but here I cannot say I see the least chance of the country being improved or the people benefited; the civiliziers are so backward themselves that they cannot be expected to civilize others. Their lives are exactly the same as the natives' lives, the only difference being that one knows a bastard sort of Arabic, wears clothes, and has a gun, and the natives lack these advantages; such being the case (and I know it though the world may not, and I shall not tell them), why distress myself to death to put these people in a position to feed wholesale on these natives? As it is, we are little better than a horde of semi-civilized brigands, and I command them! I do not repent coming, neither the work I

have done, for it would have been done by others, perhaps with more severity than I have used ; but to go further is not my wish. Baker's work was this : he placed troops at Gondokoro, Fatiko and Fouwiera and left them ; they were all in more or less misery, and years behind in pay. I have united these stations by safe roads, and put things on a proper footing as far as I can. Those three stations I mention were the provinces of which I was to be Governor-General ; it was a farce to call them Provinces of the Equator. Baker marked an " Imaginary line," and entitled it " Countries annexed to Egypt " up to that line, and this when he knew that outside Gondokoro, Fatiko or Fouwiera, his men could not move except in armed force. I have—or (D.V.) shall really accomplish—this programme which he

claims to have executed, and I think it is enough. Egypt would never have receded from Fouwiera or Fatiko, so the best thing was to connect these places with the civilized world, which being done, there is no need for me to go further; at least, I think not, and I dare say, in spite of this long rigmarole, you do not care whether in the Provinces of the Equator there are Blacks, or Greens, or Blues, and will most probably skip all this; and I am sure I do not, if—oh if!—I can get out of it. I do not care if there is one lake or a million lakes, and I do not care if the Nile has a source or not. Some philanthropic people write to me about “noble work, poor blacks,” etc. I have, I think, stopped them writing by acknowledging ourselves to be a pillaging horde of brigands, and propose to them to leave



their comfortable homes and come out to their favourite "poor blacks," or to give up their wine and devote pounds to send out real missions. One wrote me word, "That fine fellow Y—— goes out to Lake Nyassa with a fine set of young fellows, and the first dhow (boat) with slaves he meets, he will run her down with his steam-launch." Unfortunate remark, for I came down on W—— a clergyman, and remarked, "How like Mr. Y——'s proceedings were to the Apostle's ditto!" Remember this, Mr. Y—— goes out as a missionary with no earthly weapons, only a lot of Sniders! Old Livingstone wanted chains for his porters! I hate this mixing of things. ` Be a geographical explorer or not—be a brigand or not—but sail under true colours.` "We do not want your beads, we do not want your

cloth," this cry of the Moojies rings in my ears; "we want you to go away." They knew well enough the little benefits that would ever accrue from our occupation (that is, Egypt's occupation): it is not doubtful that OUR occupation of these lands would be a boon, but the occupation by *these* people can never benefit them, and therefore,

*'Summing up*—I care not if his Highness is offended or not offended; I will carry things with a high hand to the last with him, and whatever the world may say, I will content myself with what God may say, for His approval with the world against you will outweigh all worlds; not that I arrogate to myself that He approves of all my acts, but I feel the comfort that He knows I have wished to do right.

‘ Kind regards to Mr. F. and the children and yourself.

‘ Yours sincerely,

‘ C. G. GORDON.’

From Fatiko, 3rd February, 1876, he writes :

‘ . . . We occupied Mrooli 22nd January; no resistance (Mrooli is 150 miles north of Lake Victoria), and Kabba Rega has bolted, they say. I have sent troops to Masundi, and with them the new king (it is absurd calling these people kings). I am now going to Dufli to send up stores, etc. I do not know if Mr. L—— is the correspondent of *Illustrated London News*. I heard a person of that name was coming out, and I sent to say I would not receive him. I hope now to be home, if God

spares me, in November or December, for I can do no more good up here after July, when I hope steamer, etc., will be completed. I am seldom quite well, but still have tolerable health, considering the worries, etc. Mrooli is a deadly spot, and it hurt me sore to leave the soldiers there, but they appeared to like it. It is a rich country, and there is plenty to eat and nothing to do, so it suits them. *Such* a road! I was in rags from the thorns, and so cross! It annoys you to see your trousers ripped right down. There was one fracture—now you know it'—(here in the letter is inserted a drawing of a pair of trousers torn from top to bottom with great jagged rents) 'took me quite an hour to repair it. Those elephants are trying enough, weighing five tons; their great feet make pitfalls quite a foot

deep, and as they go along *our* paths, it is most dangerous; besides which they root up trees and leave them right across the paths and regularly barricade.'

'16th April, GONDOKORO.

' . . . The whole of the Foultscha storks which migrate here in winter, and which I saw on my way up to Gondokoro, have gone now back to their homes. . . . The natives are such curious beings, that one wonders whether they have the same natures as ourselves; but by certain traits I think they have thoughts of a Deity. . . . They point upward, and say God, or something up there, does this or that. A rat stole my soap the other day, and to-day he took my shaving-brush, and there it is, a relic in the panel of my cabin, and no earthly use to him.'

Again, from Dufli, 6th March, 1876, he says :

‘I am quite well now, and almost ashamed to come back; it is more the inactive life of waiting that drives me to this than health. I *hope* to start for Lardo to-day or to-morrow, to come back here in six weeks, and to leave for Khartoum in June—to arrive at Cairo in September, and to be in England in October, but am not sure I can do so, as Khedive has not answered my letters. He and I will not be the best of friends, though he may be civil enough publicly. I am tired of the inaction one’s mind gets here—no one to talk to and no books to read, lots of worrying mistakes, no assistants except in small details, such as putting together the steamer and rigging the boats, which

are now completed. However, the days go on, and I am so grateful not to be ailing in health. As for staying out, I can see I can do very little good. If I thought I could really benefit people, I might be tempted; but my ignorance of the language and my having no interpreter are insuperable drawbacks to me, while the people I have around me are quite apathetic, and it is regular "drover's" work trying to get them to undertake anything, so I have quite lost hope. I have said at Cairo that I did not undertake to "*civilize the civilizers.*" How odd it is that when one's troubles are over they seem nothing! So it is with me now. The mass of my work is done, and yet I think nothing of what has past, though really I suffered a great deal. The whole affair has been one of greater diffi-

culty than my work in China, partly from the very poor assistants I have had, and partly from the difficulties of the country and climate. I have only one European here with me now—Gessi—who came from Foultscha with me; he is going to the lake to-morrow. I feel no desire, neither have I the time or health or patience, to explore this Lake Albert; it entails the being boxed-up in sailing boats for months—say, at any rate, for six weeks—perhaps with rain, and certainly with horrors of mosquitoes.

‘ Mr. — was quite right in saying he would make all his sons learn a trade, or at any rate the smatterings of one. I have often felt, especially here, my deficiencies in this respect. Look out on about October 15th at the mail train from Dover about 5.30 p.m. You are sure to



get a sort of feeling that someone is passing. I remember always looking out as we passed when on my way from Galatz, but houses have sprung up and partly concealed your residence. However, I hope to come down and see you all. I hear that "the doles" have been very rife in England about the Turkey Bonds; it is a dreadful disease—worse than the foot and mouth ditto. Up here I feel sure that nearly everyone would have them.'

At the risk of circumlocution, I again quote passages from some of his letters to me from Africa; they throw so many side-lights on his trying life there. Again and again we have the same cry, and the deadly dulness of that life must have been something we cannot comprehend here.

From Kerri, 26th April, 1876, he writes, amongst other things :

‘ Now what can I say for myself? Very little. I am uncommonly well in health, and am waiting Gessi’s return from Lake Albert, for which he left on 8th March. He ought to be soon back. I have nothing to do from morning till night, and am just vegetating. I walk out among the hamlets of the natives, and see that they are quite happy. They choose nice pretty spots for their huts, and have apparently no cares. I hear nothing from Khedive, and do not care. As soon as I can see my way *very clear*, I will say “good-bye.” Everything is quiet and very humdrum up here. . . . Gessi being on the lake, I am quite alone, and like the quiet, sometimes thinking it

is a waste of time, but I cannot now help it.'

*'2nd May, 1876.*

“Nunc Dimittis”—the lake is surveyed, and it is over! Gessi came back 28th April. He took nine days to go round lake, which is 140 miles long and 50 miles wide. No river enters it at south end; water is very shoal, and there is a marsh. A large branch leaves the Nile to north-west 100 miles south of Duffi; it may go to the R. Wells, and if so the two great rivers have one source.'

And here he sketches the lake.

*'MROOLI, 23rd August, 1876.*

'I have not written for a long time, neither have I heard, for, being up here some seventy miles north of the equator, I have not many letters. I also did not

till lately see my way clear, but now my prospect of getting away seems brighter, and (D.V.) this is the programme: Up here in misery for nearly two months — at Lardo; at end of November at Khartoum, and there in December, and *en voyage* to Cairo and at Cairo January and half of February, and in England in the beginning of March. It may be a fortnight either way, late or earlier, but this calculation is a liberal one. . . . I hope to make some £4,000 out of my three years' work,\* which is a good profit, and will enable me to capitalize some pensions I have on me and be rid of them. Mrooli is some eighty miles south of Victoria Lake, and is at present our last station

\* Gordon had fixed his own salary at the Khedive's request, and all he asked was £2,000 per year. Baker had said it ought to be worth £12,000 or £15,000 to him.

southward. I want to form another station at Neamzongo, some fifty to sixty miles south of this, where the Nile, only fifty miles north of Lake Victoria, ceases to be navigable.' (Here follows an interesting sketch of the whole district.)

Shortly after I was surprised to read in this letter that after all he must return to Africa :

‘LARDO, 12th October, 1876.

‘I hope to leave this for Khartoum in a fortnight, and thence go to Cairo, and thence on six months’ leave to England, *to return here at the end of it.* There is no help for it ; *here* is my sphere now I have my health. I cannot say I like the prospect, and would that God would—no, I don’t!—I wish He would do what He

thinks best. I hope to be in England in January or February next, so you will not expect a long letter. I came down here from Lake Albert in eight days, which is very quick.'

'CAIRO, *8th December, 1876.*

'I arrived here on 2nd December, and hope to start for England on the 12th, to get home at that (to me) unpleasant time, Christmas.'

'OFF BRINDISI ON THE OCEAN,  
'*19th December, 1876.*

'I dare say you will get this about Christmas, when those little souls are either preparing to gorge themselves, or are gorging themselves, or have at any rate gorged themselves well, and I hope they will enjoy it.'

The next letter shows the first chapter

in the history of his sojourn in Africa was closed for a brief rest. He writes from 7, Cecil Street, Strand, 26th December, 1876:

‘I arrived on Sunday night from Cairo. I am not certain as to my future movements, viz., if I go back in three weeks as I promised, or if I do not go back at all. I feel very inclined to say “Nunc Dimittis,” for I am *tired*. . . . At 6.30 p.m., as you were going to church, I whirled past your station. I may be able to go to Southampton on Wednesday night, but am not sure.’

‘SOUTHAMPTON, 29th December, 1876.

‘Tired out with going about in this damp weather, I have sought refuge in this place. “Nunc Dimittis” is what I would say to-day also.

‘How are those *little* souls?’

And so once more he sets foot in England. What a contrast—the stir and life of London after the loneliness and inaction of those ‘vast lone lands,’ as he styled them! And how gladly would he have quitted them for ever! But it was not to be. After a short rest, he was to put on the yoke again, and bear it for many years more. He came down, of course, to see us at Chislehurst, and spent a delightful evening, interspersing all his conversation with anecdotes for the special benefit of my boys, who were at home for the holidays. He told them how he had seen an elephant kill a man, first kneeling on him and breaking every bone in his body, and then taking the carcass up with his trunk and flinging it over his head, precisely as a dog does a dead rat.

In the course of the evening my husband



called him out of the room to show him something, and he delighted the boys by putting his pipe in the mouth of one of them, and telling them they must between them keep it alight till he came back. I remember making up a great fire, thinking he would be so chilly, having come from such a hot country, but it was not the case at all. He found our room much too hot, and begged to have the door open. We all walked down with him to the station when he left, and a few days after he sent down presents of books for each of the children, and for his little god-child a silver locket and chain, with his photo inside the locket.

That evening he said to us most emphatically that he *could not* and *would not* return to Africa—that life there was intolerable to him and ‘a daily crucifixion’

—yet he took it all up again very soon after. \ I have often wondered what great pressure was brought to bear to make him do so exactly contrary to that which he wished and intended. \ He wrote in his next letter, dated from the Strand, 13th January, 1877 :

‘ I saw Lord Derby the day before yesterday, and in consequence wrote to his Highness to say I would not return—so that is over. I am tired, tired, and no earthly rest will give me quiet.’

Yet on the 24th January, 1877, he writes :

‘ The Pillar moves on, and goes towards Egypt. After much trouble I find I must go, and I leave 31st January. You may imagine, as I have to go to Southampton, I have my time fully occupied.’

On 25th January he wrote :

‘Thank you for your kind note. No, it is all for the best, and I even like it. There was a long series of misunderstandings about my going out, and through this I have to go. I am destined to that land, and will be kept there just as long as He may be pleased to employ me.’

‘We did not believe for a moment that ‘he liked it,’ and our hearts ached for him. He wrote a day or two after, saying he had been to Gravesend to his old haunts, and seen many people. He enclosed to me what he called ‘a nice Dove’s letter,’ for he used to call his boys Doves as well as Kings. It was a long letter—some of it ran as follows, and I quote from it as being not without interest, for it shows how he was kept in remembrance.

After telling Gordon where he was now

working as an apprentice, the lad goes on to say :

‘SIR, I am writing, and have not told you who I am. I am that little boy you taught for a few Sundays at the Mission Room ; doesn’t you remember you put our names down in a small book ? My name is Joseph Eke, and then there was Thomas Brenchley, that worked on the railway, and when you used to go to London you used to throw out some tracts and little books. I do remember the time so well. . . . Me and Ridley is shopmates, and it is very singular that I should come across another scholar of yours. Ridley tells me that you were in Egypt. I hope this will find you in that sort of climate in the best of health. . . . I am very sorry for T——, for he is going

with bad companions, and I think he has left the school altogether.

‘I must conclude with my kind love to you, and to let you know some of the news of your old friends.

‘So remember me to be your friend,

‘JOSEPH EKE.’

After this, Gordon came in one morning for an hour or so, and then left the same day. His next letter is dated Karen, Red Sea, 28th March, 1877, and begins with a drawing of Karen and its position with regard to Massowah and Abyssinia :

‘The frigate *Lateef*, which took me to Massowah, was burnt on her return voyage to Suez; eighteen lives were lost. I arrived here just a month ago, and after

a stay at Massowah of twenty days came on here to be nearer the frontier. Peace has for a long time virtually existed between Abyssinia and Egypt, the only obstacle being the presence of a powerful chief Muhsel, who revolted against Johannes and who came over to Egypt. Johannes feared him, and he was only partially obedient to us; he was, in fact, the great obstacle to a regular peace. This chief Muhsel had a strong army with him, and I had, indeed, to make peace with him as well as Johannes. I am glad to say that I have contented him for a time, and having sent him away from the frontier, I hope that I shall soon be able to come to terms with Johannes, who, I hear, has had Gondar taken from him by Menelek, King of Shoa (another Abyssinian). Abyssinia is a cock-pit; everyone

is a brigand or a soldier (terms which are synonymous); deeply fanatical against all rites but their own, the ignorant priests rule the country. Johannes can do us little harm; he cannot, owing to want of food, keep an army together to fight us, and his people, being taken away from tillage of their lands, are in sad plight, so I hope he will be sensible. Against Egypt, everyone is united, but the moment the Egyptians retired, they wanted to fight among themselves again (I expect they are Irishmen); the King is constantly in movement to keep his country quiet. The excommunication of the priests is the great weapon; it is terrible—far worse, or quite as bad as that of the Inquisition, and it amuses me to hear the Roman Catholic priests here complain of it, and say that the priests

want to keep the people ignorant so as to rule them ; is it not what *they* would do elsewhere if they could? . . . This is a very mountainous country ; the people are mostly Abyssinians, and I do not like them better than the blacks. The history of Abyssinia ought to be very interesting ; I am very ignorant of it. . . . I hope to get an answer from Johannes soon ; his great General, Aloula, wrote me a very civil letter. I sent him and also Johannes a revolver each.'

' KHARTOUM, 18th May, 1877.

' I arrived *viâ* Kassala and Sennaar here on the 3rd of May, and leave on the 21st for Darfur — ninety-nine days' camel-riding before me, before I get back here ; but I need the physical exercise, and am not afraid of those vast deserts. . . . I



have here a programme. . . . I think the people like me ; and it is an immense comfort that while in the old régime ten and fifteen people were flogged daily, now none get flogged. The people seem better and happier. A huge crowd stands around the palatial gates all day long, but only a few are privileged with an interview, for I keep a box with a slit in the lid for petitions at the door, and everyone can put his petition into it. Hitherto the people could never approach the Governor unless they bribed the clerks : £600, £300, ten ounces of gold, £100, and £80, have been given to my head clerk to obtain favours from me. This has been brought to me by him, and put by me into treasury ; but I never punish the givers, for they have been brought up to it. If I live, and God blesses me as

He has done, I may make these people happy to some little extent.'

In June, 1877, he writes :

'If you want to know the life I lead, I rise at 7 or 8 a.m., staying on my bed till the sun drives me out, then get up and write or loiter out the day as best I can. Sometimes the people come with complaints, which as far as I can I rectify. It is a vegetable life: of course this is my life *here*; when I go to towns, then I have more petitions to look to and more to do. No, it is not a pleasant life; the country is not one to entice me to go out in, and so the days roll on. Do I like it? No, not a bit; but I feel comforted that I would perhaps be no better elsewhere, and so I am fairly content.'

‘OOMCHANGA, DARFUR,

‘*June 22nd, 1877.*

‘Thank you so much for twenty-four letters which you ought to have sent me. I am in an arid land, and as far as comfort is concerned, it does not exist for the body. I am *waiting* for troops. Do you know what it is to *wait*? it nearly kills me. However, I suppose it is a part of one’s cup, and is good for one. The country is more or less disturbed through the conduct of the Bashi Bazouks, who are the curse of these lands, as they are in Turkey, and who are my deadly enemies. I have broken up about 2,000 of them, and will get rid of them all when I can pay them.’

Again he writes :

‘ OBEID, KORDOFAN,  
‘ *3rd October, 1877.*

‘ With your letter came one from Johannes, in which he accepts the new frontier, and consequently peace ; he is not complimentary to my sovereign, so I shall put his letter quietly by for the moment.

‘ I had just come in (when I received yours of August 13th) from a little ride of 370 miles, from Shika. I have travelled on camel since I saw you 2,300 miles, and have the same distance still to go to finish this year’s work. It is very tiring work, day after day grinding along with tired camels, but, thank God, He has given me strength, and much blessed my efforts in these lands. The war is over in Darfur. The soi-disant Sultan ought to be either

a prisoner or a fugitive ; he was in a sorry plight when I left Fasher.

‘ I am in hopes of getting away from here in four or five days for Dongola, and then go to the Abyssinian frontier to see Johannes, if he will see me. He is a queer fish, and I cannot make him out. Yes, I believe women have to bear the brunt of life’s battle, and that without its glory. Indeed, I may say I always recoiled from the idea of linking any unfortunate woman to my fortunes, knowing my temperament as I do. I have such a lot of letters to write, and am *so* cross to-day. Your letter and two of my sister’s, Nos. 21 and 22, were miraculously preserved. Before I read or opened them they got blown away with some waste-paper, and were rescued from the kitchen ere they were burnt. I had noticed your

handwriting and my sister's, and knew I had not read them.'

Again we get a glimpse of his daily life and work, as he writes from Massowah, 5th January, 1878 :

'Thanks for your kind note of November 27th, received here to-day. I am not much further advanced than when I was here before, except that Johannes has allowed his people to trade with Massowah, and that things are just as they were before the war. He wrote to me an evasive letter when I sent him the treaty of peace, since which we have had no correspondence. I have now written to him again to get him to pardon some refugees who are a sore trouble for us and a great expense, and await his answer.

'I am in capital health and can sleep

here; it was not easy to do so in Darfur, to which place I have to return ere long; but the fighting is all over, thank God, and if I can finish with this refugee Abyssinian business, the Soudan will be at peace, for the first time since it was taken. The slave trade is, I consider, at *an end.*'

'16th January, 1878,

'EN ROUTE FROM SUAKIM TO BERBER.

' . . . At Obeid on 7th and 6th October I was very seedy, and had a lot of blood taken from me, but on the 10th October I was all right, and have been so ever since. Johannes is far away in Godjam, trying to put down a rebel vassal—Ras Adda—who has rebelled. There has been no fighting between Menelek, King of Shoa, and Johannes; the newspapers are utterly wrong in these reports. I am

going up to Darfur to settle the country. It is tolerably quiet now, and I hope to be back in ten weeks.

‘ You ask me what are my ideas of a future life. I think this life is only one of a series of lives that our incarnated parts have lived. I have little doubt of our having pre-existed, and also that in the time of our pre-existence we were actively employed, and so, therefore, I believe in our active employ in a future life, and like the thought. We shall, I think, be far more perfect in a future life, and, indeed, go on *towards* perfection, but never can attain it. We will, perhaps, in a future life, realize more of God, to know whom is everlasting life. I am just in from a long ride since daybreak, so I will not write more than my kindest regards to your husband, etc.’



‘ NEAR ASSOUAN, *March 1st*, 1878.

‘ You will be surprised to find when you get this that I am at Cairo, to which place his Highness has called me. I did not like coming down into civilized life; however, there was no help for it. I am fearfully put out at the Russian advance. . . .

‘ How are all the children? They must be growing up. Oh dear! what would induce me to live my life again? And yet one ought not to have that feeling. I picked up a nice present for his Highness, viz., the sceptre, helmet, shield, sidearm, guard, spear and chain armour of the Sultan of Darfur. If true, and I believe they are genuine, they were made in A.D. 863 (1,015 years ago!!!). They are beautifully worked, of iron with gold tracings and figures on them, quite bijoux.

The sceptre has a ram's head on it ; the helmet is thus—just like the shape of a Prussian helmet with a spike ; it has two places for ostrich feathers at *a* ; the spear is two-pronged ; the shield is a small one, with four bosses on it, and is very fully engraved. I expect his Highness will be delighted with it.'

Gordon wrote from Cairo on March 10th, and spoke of all the bustle he was in there. I believe he was called in order to hear what he had to suggest about finance in Egypt, and I imagine his ideas of the remedies he would employ for the existing evil were not approved. Anyhow, on 12th May he was back in Massowah, from which his next letter is dated.

He says :

'Harrar has a very ancient history

(*vide* Burton's "First Footsteps in Africa" —a first-rate book), and is well worth a visit, though the fatigue of going there nearly killed me. No; I failed in the finance scheme through the weakness of his Highness, and *though I say it myself*, I think I would have satisfactorily settled the question; but it would have been a great deal of trouble, and I am glad God ordained it otherwise. . . .

'I do not know how matters will end with me, for I was too outspoken at Cairo to have strengthened my position; when one depends on one man, a bit of cheese or a fig will cause, perhaps, a change in that man's digestion and temper. Thank God, my dear Mrs. F., that you live in a land where cheese and figs produce no such effect.'

Then from Khartoum, 8th August, 1878:

‘ . . . . As for myself, I am exceedingly weary, and wish with a degree of bitterness that it was all over.’ (One cannot help thinking what would have been his feelings at this moment had the veil of the future been drawn aside for a second, and shown him that he had only six more years of trials to go through before his final release.) ‘I am cooped up here now, and am much occupied with the finances, which are in a very low state. My life is so burdensome and weary; but I feel it is better to be employed here than to be idle elsewhere. I am daily striking deadly blows against the slave trade, and am establishing a sort of Government of Terror about it.

I have hung a man for mutilating a little boy, and would not ask leave to do so. I do not care if his Highness likes it or not. But I have a nasty revolt in Bahr Gazelle, and do not know how it will end. I would like to go there, but dare not leave Khartoum. I have four small hippopotami in my court—lovely little fellows, quite round and smooth, like very fat pigs, and so tame. The little elephant in my court did not like their smell; he butted them, and spirted water on them when they came near his Majesty. . . .’

‘KHARTOUM, 26th October, 1878.

‘. . . A terrible thing happened here yesterday: a Frenchman—Unguet—in whom I had full confidence, and to whom I had given some big contracts, got ill, and yesterday morning he disappeared

from his home; and there is little doubt he went down the mud-flat and threw himself into the river. We afterwards found that he had had a telegram from Cairo, saying, "Come down at once, or all will be lost," to which he answered, he would never come down. So we all suspect that he had become bankrupt, and that that, combined with his illness, made him throw himself into the river. I fear we shall lose £1,600, or more, but this is all conjecture.

'There seems to be a curse on these lands; everything goes crookedly to our eyes. You speak of the accident to the *Princess Alice* (steamboat), yet, if you think, every day's paper brings you the death-list of many, and you think nothing of it, yet this death-list of the *Princess Alice* is only deaths of, say, some ten

days papers' combined. Many deaths all at once horrify us, but one, or even ten, do not disturb us in the least.

'The hippopotami have reached Cairo safely.'

'KHARTOUM, 9th February, 1879.

'... I cannot think of leaving this country, though it is uphill work enough. The revolt of the slave-dealers in Bahr Gazelle has had a severe shock: they were beaten by Gessi, with the loss of 2,500 killed; but I am still anxious for Gessi, as I fear he might be assassinated.'

The next letter dates from near Sokota, on the river Jocazze, Abyssinia, October 5, 1879, and begins:

'At the end of August I came to Cairo, with the intention of coming home; but five days afterwards I was *en route* for

Abyssinia, to try and settle finally with the King, who was massing his troops on the frontier. I found the new Khedive a first-rate man, and honest, so I was glad to serve him. I have since September 11th been wending my way, over sheep-tracks and endless mountains, towards Debra Tabor, which is near the Tsarra lake, whence the Blue Nile takes its rise. It is very dull work, and we have yet ten days more before we get to the King's place (Debra Tabor); and then I do not know the result of this voyage. The Abyssinians are a very primitive people, and live as they lived years and years ago, never advancing. The King has queer fortresses called *ambas*; they consist of hills with precipices on all sides, while on the top is water, trees, etc. The King never lets any of his great men possess



them ; he keeps his own soldiers in them, and lots of provisions are stored in them. They are unapproachable except at one place, where the entrance is, and even there people have to be hauled up by cords, etc. One near here, called Mus Kalos, is like this. Some of the precipices are 100 to 200 feet perpendicular. All the State prisoners are kept in these *ambas*. All of them have great histories. If all goes well, I hope to be back in Cairo in November, and to be in England in January. With a happy conclusion to this Abyssinian business, I will have rendered all the Soudan quiet, and got rid of all my legacies which I inherited from my predecessors. . . .'

There was a good deal of delay, we thought, in his coming home. Gordon

was not heard of for some little while, and we often thought of those terrible *ambas*, and of how easily King John could have interned him in one if he displeased him. It was not till February 2nd that we heard from him again, from Southampton, or, rather, he wrote at once from London; but as he was going on at once to Southampton, addressed the letter as from there. He said it seemed too damp and cold to come and see us, but that his coming home was a fact, and he would come when he had had a little rest. And two days after he did come. At about half-past six we heard the well-known voice asking for us, and then the dear face beaming upon us all, delight at meeting again reflected on every feature and reciprocated most heartily. He had not finished shaking hands all round when, before

seating himself, he began in his peculiar style to reply to something I had written in the last letter he had had from me, months before, in Khartoum. I had differed from him (which he never liked). He had said in his that the Soudanese knew God as their Father, and were therefore often equal to Christians. I had replied they might know God as their Father, but as they did not know Christ, they must be vastly inferior to Christians in happiness and everything else. I was wondering how he would take that up in his next letter, and even as he entered the room I thought of it; but I was not prepared for his entering at once upon the subject without a word of introduction, thus: 'Yes, you were right; they could not know Christ,' and then going on shaking hands again and talking

of other things. The evening passed all too quickly. He was looking very thin and much older, and we were not surprised to hear shortly afterwards that he was going to Switzerland for a long change. As usual, we greatly enjoyed the evening. He laughed with us over his experiences at Cairo as a financier, and about the telegrams he had previously sent there which no one could read, and how Sir Evelyn Baring returned them to him, requesting him to decipher them, and how he was quite unable to read them himself. He said he rejoiced in being free, and intended to take a real holiday and a real rest. He told us he had sent in his resignation to the War Office, but he was not permitted to resign. He gave us an account of how he had presented himself at the Queen's Levée, as in duty bound,

and that in passing the Prince of Wales, he had whispered in Gordon's ear, 'Come and see me at lunch-time on Sunday'; and that when he went he found the Duke of Cambridge there with the Prince, and they pressed him very much as to why he wished to resign his commission, and when he answered, 'Chiefly because he wanted rest,' the Duke said, 'Take a year's leave, then, or more,' but refused to accept his resignation. By the way, he was slightly annoyed that at the Levée in question Lord Sydney had announced him as Captain Gordon—this after many years of colonelcy; he did not like it.

Gordon told us much of his African experience. My boys hung upon his words. He told them he had seen strong men on the march cry like little children at the miseries of their position, when, as some-

times happened in marching, there was no place for shelter when darkness came on, and they had had to lie down to sleep just in the road, almost in pools of water, having marched all day in heavy rain—no tents, no fire, and very little food. He also told us about his interview with the new Khedive at Cairo, and how he placed Gordon in a very strong light to study him, while he himself sat in deep shadow.

Presently Gordon asked me if he might smoke (we were in the dining-room); free permission was of course immediately granted, so then he turned to my eldest boy (17), and asked him—oh, so humbly—if he would be so kind as to search in his coat-pocket in the hall for his pipe and pouch, and bring them, saying, as the lad left the room: ‘They

are so ticklish at that age, you know ; you must be careful how you speak to them, and not offend their dignity.'

It was very characteristic of him, as the evening wore on and he got tired, to say to me : ' Now, Mrs. F., you must not ask me any more questions.' So after that we let him talk or be silent as he pleased till he rose to go. His last words to me were : ' Will come and see you again soon.' And yet from a series of mishaps, too long to detail here, he never came again, and though he continued to correspond up to the time of his death, I saw him no more. For four years more we exchanged letters, and then he went to his martyrdom and his rest, and we still wait till the time shall come for meeting him again.

On February 17, 1880—it was just before this visit—he wrote :

‘Two a.m. saw me writing last night. Eight a.m. saw me in cab this morning. I feel as tired as if I had wheeled one hundred wheelbarrows. The Levée—a mass of glitter, to be worms in thirty years’ time—crushed and kept waiting! I saw Sir Harry Parkes, who visited your house; he is subdued and quiet and nice.

‘You will be kind, I know; I will be with you for millions of years; do not press me now. . . .’

The next, from Brussels, says :

‘I am staying with Vivian, our minister here. Mrs. Vivian, who has twins eight months old and a boy two and a half years, frequently asks me to marry (not



her, for she has a spouse). No, I could not, after what one sees of the deal of worry there is with idle lads. You are blessed in having good, steady, working boys; but if they had been idle—well, you would have learned patience. . . .

‘I wish sometimes I had more physical trials, for I eat my heart out. I long for the future life, when there will be no lack of work. How the room was fumigated!’ (This in allusion to his smoking, the evening he spent with us.)

From Brussels he went to Lausanne, whence he writes :

‘17th March, 1880.

‘I came on traces of your husband and you at Nyon, near this, the other day, when I came to see Mr. and Mrs. Reichel, of the Moravian School there, where one

of my nephews is. It is a very nice school, I think, with a wholesome tone about it, and the master and mistress seem good people, fully impressed with the importance of their work. You had been there last year. I do not like any schools I see here except the Moravian. I am not coming home till the elections are over, though I much fear this Government will come in again.'

April 21st finds him home again and staying at Chelsea, which he finds quieter than Sackville Street. He writes :

' I saw your house as I passed up from Dover—smoke coming from the chimneys, roasting going on for those little mouths. . . . I am very tired of this orb, and long for the next. I think we will not enter into perfect and entire perfection all at

once—it will be progressive. . . . I do not want a good place, I want a place of danger and exposure, and I feel I would seek it in the hospitals if I cannot find it elsewhere.'

And this was written less than three years before he got the place of danger he wished, which led to his getting his *cong e*. I had written to him showing that I did not approve of his desire for death, which I called morbid and unhealthy, and told him he was restless. So he writes from Chelsea :

'With respect to the longing to be rid of life, our Lord was *straitened* to finish His work. St. Paul had a desire to depart, and one's feeling is natural, to desire a haven of rest and one's heritage, rather than to be still heirs-*apparent*.'

The extinction of self is the great object of our life: it is eventually extinguished in everyone when he dies. We ought to die before the actual death takes place, and though in the flesh, live the resurrection life; *i.e.*, a dead person regards not the praise or censure of man—the world with its pride and honours; he is dead to them. So should we be, if we would know the resurrection life. I am restless because self is not crucified, and because God has given me a belief that the next world is better than this. . . .

‘Nothing is settled for the present for my movements. I will come some day when you come back.’

On May 4, 1880, he writes, to our surprise:

‘I am going to India in eight days as

private secretary to Lord Ripon. I do not want congratulations; the event has been rolled out of the scroll written ere the world began. I want your prayers. . . . I will see you again where there will be rest.'

And on May 5, 1880:

'I am sorry that for the moment I shall not see you or Mr. F. or your children, but I shall see you for ever, all of you, in the next world. I will write to you as you write to me—letter for letter.

'Think over these words. Would it fret you to be painfully placed for *ten minutes*? Well, I do not think it would. I value all your prayers; they are worth millions to me.'

He was fond of speaking of his life here as a painful ten minutes, or of his death as coming 'the day after tomorrow.'

A post-card, dated October 21, 1880, said:

'Got back on Tuesday morning to Southampton; shall pass Mr. F.'s office at 11.40 a.m. on Monday.'

Since his previous letter in May he had been to India with Lord Ripon and thrown up the appointment; then on to China, where he did good service in advising them not to fight France. He renewed his friendship with Li Footai (?), and finally came back again to Southampton October 22, 1880, and wrote:

'I do not know what I am going to

do, or where I shall go. . . . I never forget you all, but would ask you to let me choose my own time.'

Several letters followed on subjects of mutual interest, but which might not interest others, so they are omitted. He had written and published a little pamphlet on the Eucharist, entitled 'Take, eat.' Some of it we liked very much, and some we disagreed with, and a little controversy passed between us, and perhaps a little vexation on both sides. He complained that I had 'rent' him. Soon after this we find him writing from Mauritius, November 14, 1881. Here he found rest for a time, and wrote many letters to me about his ideas on religion, which would be out of place here, though to me it is all very interest-

ing, even when I do not agree with it. One sentence at the end of a very long letter is so characteristic that I must insert it. It runs thus :

‘As long as we prefer the daily paper to the Bible things are wrong with us, yet I greet the paper with greater joy than my Bible.’

‘PORT LOUIS, *3rd February*, 1882.

‘. . . I believe I shall be leaving this about April 14. I am in temporary command here now, the old Commissioner having gone home last March. I am, thank God, very content here, and have had great comforts—so great as to still, at any rate, the spirit of criticism for a time, and to lose the ambition which either openly or secretly devoured me. . . .



‘To me the world has no longer the look of sorrow that it had. I am no longer surprised at anything. . . . There is the natural development of evil and good till the end. . . . I purpose going to Palestine when I leave this, and to settle there. . . . I do not think I could stay in England; its conventionality, dinners, etc., are too much for me. I like less luxury. . . .

‘The origin of the word Diabolus is “he that setteth at variance by slander.” What a deal in that title! The women in Titus ii. 3 are called by the same title, though it is written “busy-bodies.” Now, imagine how often we are Diabolus in our talk; we criticise this or that act of private or public people and judge. . . . A letter of mine appeared in the *Times* the other day,

though I would not have allowed it to be put in, yet I feel glad at it, for it is a good letter; but I ought not to have written it, for it is against constituted authorities. . . .

‘ What has done miracles for me is the Holy Sacrament, and I could hold forth for many a sheet on what benefits I have derived from it. Even taken in the lowest form, the first eating did bring evil into the world—the natural eating. Why deny to the second eating some equally mighty effect? Think for yourself and search the Scriptures. Do not mind whether this or that sect have modified, changed, or misrepresented this Sacrament. It is virtually and actually the Communion; the communicating of the Divinity of Christ to your mortal body, with all the attributes of

that Divinity. How is it that Christians are so utterly and completely stagnant? If we progress in holiness, ought we not to know it? Can we say we are progressing? We ought to answer that. My firm belief is that it (the stagnation) is owing to neglect of the Sacraments. Did I recommend in such strong terms any remedy for any petty ill, it would be listened to and tried; why not in this case, which is the cure for so great an ill? Remember, I do not write as if you did not communicate; I write because I feel that the Eucharist is the zenith of Christian worship; it embraces all, and something beyond all.'

‘PORT LOUIS, *3rd February*, 1882.

‘. . . I hope to leave this on April 14, and being a General, not to be again

employed. I like the place fairly well, having got back, thank God! my old mining habits into the Scriptures. I hope never to lose them again; they more than fill the gap left by giving up ambitions, though sometimes one has a barren time, but it is repaid soon afterwards. This is a pretty isle, densely populated with Indian population. The planters are of French extraction. I do not go out one bit more than I can help, though I see lots of people.

‘I hear this mail that I am to be promoted in April, and leave this in that month. I want to go to Syria, but am not sure if it will be allowed by the authorities.’

The next, written on May 5, 1882, from Ain Kharin, near Jerusalem, shows

he had his desire to go to Palestine granted. He says :

‘Never mind about earthly meetings—we will be for ever together. I came here on 17th January, and have a house three miles west of Jerusalem, and find it much as I thought—very little changed from our Lord’s time. . . .’

Then follow very long letters about the types and symbols, the Mosque Rock, etc., etc., tedious to most readers, but interesting as showing the working of his mind at this time. His letters were full of drawings of all the various places that struck him, and which he wanted us to see also, and there was much mystical writing and many curious ideas. In one letter we get back to his own personality again, thus :

‘I sincerely believe that constant Communion give great strength, for when I am in the voyages I am cut off from them and am as carnal as ever I was. My plague (?) is one of ill-natured criticism of others—evil-speaking, back-biting—which to me seems mean and despicable. . . . Excuse this talk of I, but I cannot help it. . . . Having my eyes on Him, I yet look at an ant-heap, and wish I was under it. . . .’

This last was written from Cape Colony, September 29th, 1882, where he had gone to try and settle the trouble with the Boers, and where he very nearly lost his life. On November 9th he wrote again from Southampton, where he made a short stay, and then from Charing Cross Hotel on December 27th, 1882, saying :

‘I am going to Port Said to-morrow, and thence to Mount Carmel. I hope to find Haifa a suitable place to stop at. . . . I have been scarcely anywhere since I came from the Cape. I have now, I think, done with active life, and shall have time to study more than I have been able to of late years. You and yours are never forgotten by me, and I feel you never forget me in your prayers. Kindest regards to you all . . . Believe me,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.’

From Jerusalem, March 20th, 1883, he writes next, and again on April 4th about the present-day Jews of Jerusalem. Everything about them interested him very much. And the next day, the 5th, came a very long letter full of sketches of

the Tabernacle and the Great Mosque, and all his ideas about these things. On August 3rd, 1883, he was at Jaffa, living in the house of Simon the tanner (according to tradition). He writes :

‘I have done Jerusalem now to my satisfaction. It never aroused any feelings of reverence. It, however, enabled me to see the types more clearly. To me this is as any other land, except historically. In that way, as the scene of great events, it is and ever must be interesting and full of subjects for contemplation. I had feared trouble with France, but hope it has blown over, for I see they have withdrawn the Suez Canal Convention. I never see anyone except one family who live here; their two poor little children look so frail in this



heat. I do sympathize with those poor mothers who are obliged to be in these hot lands.'

The next was from Jaffa, September 11th, 1883, a long letter full of mysticism, and then Brussels, January 5th, 1884. The fateful year was now entered upon, and the release he longed for was not far off. But at this time his intention was to serve the King of the Belgians on the Congo. He writes :

'Just a line to say I go to Congo on February 5th, and will be over in a few days at Southampton.'

Next :

*'8th January, 1884.*

' . . . I fear that in the fourteen days I stay in England I could not engage to come to Chislehurst. I saw the lights in

your house as I passed last night. With very kind regards,

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.’

After this I wrote asking him at what time on the 14th he would be leaving Charing Cross for the Congo, as my son and I would run up to Charing Cross to get a peep at him, and my husband intended to be at Cannon Street station as the train passed through and wave a farewell, to which he replied on a post-card :

‘I hope (D.V.) to leave on 25th or 26th January, at ten a.m., Charing Cross, but I am not sure as yet. I am very sorry I have not time to see you all.’

And the next day came another post-card from Southampton :

‘ I am leaving England (D.V.) on Wednesday, *viâ* Ostend, for Brussels by day train ; but do not let me cause you inconvenience to come up.’

Also to my husband he wrote a post-card from Southampton, dated 12th January, 1884, as follows :

‘ Thank you for your kind note. I am just back from Exeter, and have fifty-four letters to answer. All I can say is, that if I had time I would come ; but I leave in twelve days, and have not time, for I have not got a single thing of outfit yet. Pray pardon me. With kindest love to you all,

‘ C. G. GORDON.’

On the morning of January 16th I got a post-card, dated 15th, saying he would

leave much earlier than he had thought, and we supposed he had already passed our house on his way to Dover even before the card arrived. My husband suggested that he *might* not have left then, although the card so stated, and urged me and my son to go up to Charing Cross all the same on the chance of there having been some hitch in the arrangements by which we might perhaps see him after all. The post-card ran as follows :

‘15th 1, 1884.

‘I see train goes at 7.40 a.m. Fear much you will not see me. Good-bye.

‘C. G. GORDON.’

On that day, the 16th, there was a dense fog, and I had a bad cough, so I did not go up; I also thought it possible, knowing his little peculiarities as I did, that he

might have gone earlier, in order to escape farewells, so I decided not to go. But, oh, how bitterly disappointed I was afterwards to hear that after all he *had* left at ten a.m. from Charing Cross, having overslept himself, and so been unable to go by the earlier train. That day was a very sad one to me: I felt so CERTAIN that he was going to his death, and that I should never see him again, and I wrote and told him so. Of course, I supposed that day he was going to the Congo, and did not know how quickly his destination was to be changed to Khartoum. I little guessed that in a few hours he was recalled to London to discuss at the War Office the whole question of Khartoum, and that the King of the Belgians' plan for the Congo had to be thrown over, while Charley Gordon was sent, as his brother Sir Henry

said, to 'cut off the dog's tail.' But so it was. One more letter came to me from Brussels, dated 17th January, 1884, which said:

' . . . Sorry for the *contretemps*, but it was not my fault, for I was so busy from two p.m. Monday, when I arrived in London, till two a.m. Tuesday, I really had not a moment to spare, and so you will excuse me. . . . I got here last night, and am not sure how long I stay.

' Kindest regards to you all,' etc.

On the following Friday Gordon's cousin dined with us, and little did we all think that that very evening, at about ten o'clock, Gordon was again on the platform at Charing Cross, taking his final farewell of the country he was never to see again, and that he was

just starting for the Soudan, where at Khartoum he was to suffer so terribly, and know what it was to be lonely and forsaken—apparently forgotten and abandoned to his cruel fate so easily. The Duke of Cambridge and Sir Garnet Wolseley walked up and down with him till the train started. Did they, too, feel he was going to his grave?

Then followed his rapid journey—flying through the desert—then his arrival in Khartoum, whence the next day he wrote a post-card to me, dated Khartoum, 18th February, 1884, thus:

‘Sorry not to have seen you as I left, but hope you are well. I arrived here last night, having left London 18th January, 1884. We have had a good journey, and it was a pleasure to see my

old friends again. I hope God will let the light of His countenance shine on these people after all their troubles. As you may imagine, I have not much time to do any writing. I wonder whether Carter has left for his home in heaven. I hope things will go better. I have no hope but in our Lord, whose hand holds the hearts of men. Good-bye.

‘Yours sincerely,

‘C. G. GORDON.’

And this was the last letter I received from him. I do not doubt he wrote again more than once, but in all probability his messengers could not get through, for it was very soon after his arrival that he was penned in, and that his tremendous difficulties began. The treacherous murder of Mr. Power and



Colonel Stewart are too well known to need repetition here. I have often thought Gordon must afterwards have been glad they were not with him to share his miseries. His diaries written in Khartoum during those awful months, when he was always looking out for the help that never came, are written with some bitterness. I have seen them and held them in my hand. There was the familiar writing, but what he must have been feeling as he wrote one dare not try to realize; it is too bitter, too painful, and one is swayed alternately by a sense of reverence and a sense of deep shame as one looks upon those records.

It is true the gates of Khartoum were never opened for his liberation, but something far better awaited him; doubtless,



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on that fateful morning the gates of paradise were opened wide to admit one of England's greatest, purest, noblest sons.



## APPENDIX.

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GORDON would never talk of himself and his doings, therefore his whole life never can and never will be written. The light that he only could throw on his Crimean diary, now in my possession, he would never give. Before he let me have it he tore out several pages, and I have always believed that they were the most interesting ones, and that, probably, they described some of his heroic acts for which he did not desire publicity or praise.

He told us himself about the way in which he treated the author of the first

book that was written about Gordon ; it was entitled 'The Ever-Victorious Army,' being an account of how Gordon quelled the Taiping Rebellion in China. He said that at the author's request he gave him every facility for the work, and invited him to stay at Fort House, where he lent him his diary and other papers to assist him in writing his history. Then, from something the author said, Gordon discovered that some personal acts of his were being recorded, so he asked the author to let him see what he had written. Alas, for the poor author ! Gordon made short work of all the part concerning himself, of which he had not authorized the publication, and tore out page after page of the book. He told us the author was very much vexed, and told Gordon he had spoiled

the book, and one cannot help sympathizing somewhat with the author; but Gordon really *hated praise*.

\ Gordon and I had often discussed questions about the next life; we both agreed in not believing in eternal punishment, but wondered how it would fare with many amiable kind people who yet were rebels in Christ's kingdom, for they did not obey His commands nor acknowledge Him as their King. One day I wrote some lines about what I thought, and sent them to him—it was years after our talk. He liked them, and said he had often thought it might be as I had described it; and that he liked the lines is the sole excuse for reproducing them here, for they have, of course, no poetical merit whatever.

WRITTEN 1878. SENT TO GORDON.

'She cannot live three weeks,' they whispered low ;  
But yet I heard—they called it funeral knell,  
But, oh ! to me 'twas like a lovely song  
Of brightest hope, that filled my heart with joy.  
Live ! Do they call *this* life ? I *shall* have life  
In three weeks' time—so soon the doctors say,  
At Easter, when arose the Lord of life.  
Then shall I live indeed !—not chained as now,  
Not a dark prison in a darker world,  
Not in this breathing tomb, but bright and free,  
*Akin to Him*, never to vex Him more,  
Sinless at last. Exult, O bounding heart !  
Leap high to welcome Death ! At last *he* comes.  
Grim gaoler whom I've watched and waited for  
All these long years, come quick and set me free,  
Even three weeks seem over-long to me !

\* \* \* \* \*

Then, was it sleep ?—sudden the creaking chains  
Fell from the heavy body, and the soul  
Stept out into the light and saw *all this* :  
Long lines of angels, all with tender eyes  
Bent upon me, and whispering softly, 'Come !'  
Then, as my fears grew less, some took my hand,  
And others bore me gently, yet so swift ;

They spoke my name—I knew it was my name,  
Although I never heard the like before ;  
They passed it up along the double line,  
And added, ‘ She is coming now—prepare !’  
And as I went each instant seemed more full  
Of deepest joy : one backward glance I sent  
To earth far, far below me, which lay there  
One huge black prison, like an evil thing  
Hung upon nothing, and the only blot  
In God’s fair universe.

‘ Where are you taking me ?’ I asked, and they  
Said low, ‘ Into the presence of the King.’  
And then all did obeisance as they spoke,  
All bowed their heads, and so they staid awhile ;  
And I—I watched them, and I cried aloud,  
‘ Teach me to do like that ! Oh, I would lie  
At His dear feet when I shall see Him near,  
And never rise again—’tis heav’n enough  
Just to lie there to all eternity.’

‘ Not so,’ they answered, ‘ you are akin to Him ;  
His seal and likeness, they are on your brow ;  
You shall indeed bow down, and He will speak,  
And He will draw you to Himself—your name  
He will declare, and claim you for His own,  
And joy to see you here.’

Then came a *strange sweet hush*, and then my  
eyes,

These changèd eyes, looked up and gazed on Him.  
They gazed and drank, and then they gazed again,  
And all my deep obeisance was forgot.  
And then He spoke, and all my nature then  
Responded, and I knew Him for my King,  
My God, my joy, my heaven, and my all !  
Oh ! I was *satisfied*—oh, fulness this  
I never thought to know ; for when on earth  
Ever there was a want, a craving need,  
A hollow that no earthly thing could fill.  
But now 'twas satisfaction full and deep,  
And ev'ry fibre of my yearning soul  
Was satisfied : I longed to stay like this,  
Gazing on Him throughout eternity,  
And needed nothing more.

Sudden a pang  
Shot through me for the dear ones left behind,  
For whom I longed to come and share my joy.  
Instantly angels led me to a place  
Where, looking up, I saw a monster map  
Called Earth, and there they showed my dear ones  
all  
Toiling along the path they had to tread,  
And on each side the lessons they had learned  
Recorded by each side of their hard road.  
Some had learned much, and but a little way  
Their feet had now to go to reach the end ;



Some, oh ! so little, and the record then  
Showed how much they must still acquire ere  
Their journey should be ended ; and I grieved,  
Shuddered to see what hard and painful roads  
Had been appointed them ; and I cried out,  
' Not this—not this ! he could not bear such pain !'  
But quick they showed me 'twas the only way  
That led to satisfaction like to mine.

And I was silenced ; and then all at once  
My spirit praised Him, and a song of joy  
Broke from my spirit, rapt and steeped in praise  
For all the way that He would lead them still  
To bring them up to me and to Himself,  
So that they should not, could not, miss the way.  
And I was so entranced with mine own song  
I could not cease, but ever and again  
Burst forth afresh in lovelier, nobler strains,  
Praising His name.

But mem'ry stilled my song : ' Oh, where are they,  
So many others whom I knew on earth,  
Who did not know or did not love the King ?  
I *hoped* to see them here.'

They answered low,  
' Th' unholy cannot with the holy be ;  
They must go otherwhere—*we* do not know  
Where that may be ; the King, He only knows.'  
And then *they* sang, praising His mighty love,

And I stood list'ning, thrilled and o'erpowered with  
joy,

Learning to sing like that !

Then came His loving mandate, and they cried,

' She is to rest a thousand years or so,

For she has striven long and suffered much ;

After, she shall take service for the King.'

And as they led me on to show me more,

Sudden I woke—and it was but a dream.

Oh, bitter disappointment ! to awake

And still be here, the river still to cross,

The farewells still to speak, the pains to bear !

Yet will I wait His time, although those words

Were all untrue : ' She cannot live three weeks.'

I am much struck, in reading the life of Sir Richard Burton, to see how greatly, in many things, he and Gordon resembled each other. There was the same daring spirit, the same love of 'honour, not honours,' the same contempt for public opinion, the same high sense of duty, the same truthfulness, but where Gordon's mind was mystical, Sir

Richard's was superstitious. Both had true religion, and both were unconventional to the last degree. Both disliked civilization and life in civilized countries; and even down to such small details recorded in Sir Richard's life, such as his always having the plainest furniture in the room he occupied most, and several deal tables on which he kept all his books and papers—that, too, was exactly like Gordon. When at Fort House, Gravesend, he had, at least, four of these plain deal tables, on which no cloth was ever laid to hide their ugliness, but different sets of books and papers were kept upon each, and no one was allowed to touch them but himself.

He was very anxious that I should do something useful at the workhouse, where at that time there was no chap-

lain; so I consented at last to visit some of the women's wards, four of them, and one afternoon he came to escort me and introduce me to the matron. I stayed a long time, and told the women I would visit them once a week. On leaving I found he had waited for me, and was ready to walk home with me; of course I was very glad of his company. It was a summer's afternoon, and we extended our walk somewhat, having most interesting talks all the time. It was that day that he told me that one of his daily prayers was that he might have 'fellowship with Christ's sufferings.' I could not enter into this feeling at all; it frightened me, and I argued the point with him: first, as to whether he was able for this; and next, as to why he wished it, for I maintained that there

was quite enough suffering for everybody in this world without praying for more. Of course I could not move him in the matter, but often and often afterwards I thought his prayer had been granted, and that he did drink of the same cup by being betrayed and forsaken—apparently by *God and man*—and then killed.

THE END.



Gordon's final words, in the last letter he wrote to his sister Augusta, and which arrived after the news of his death :

C. S. Gordon.

As I am quite happy, thank God, & like Lawrence, I have tried to do my duty."

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